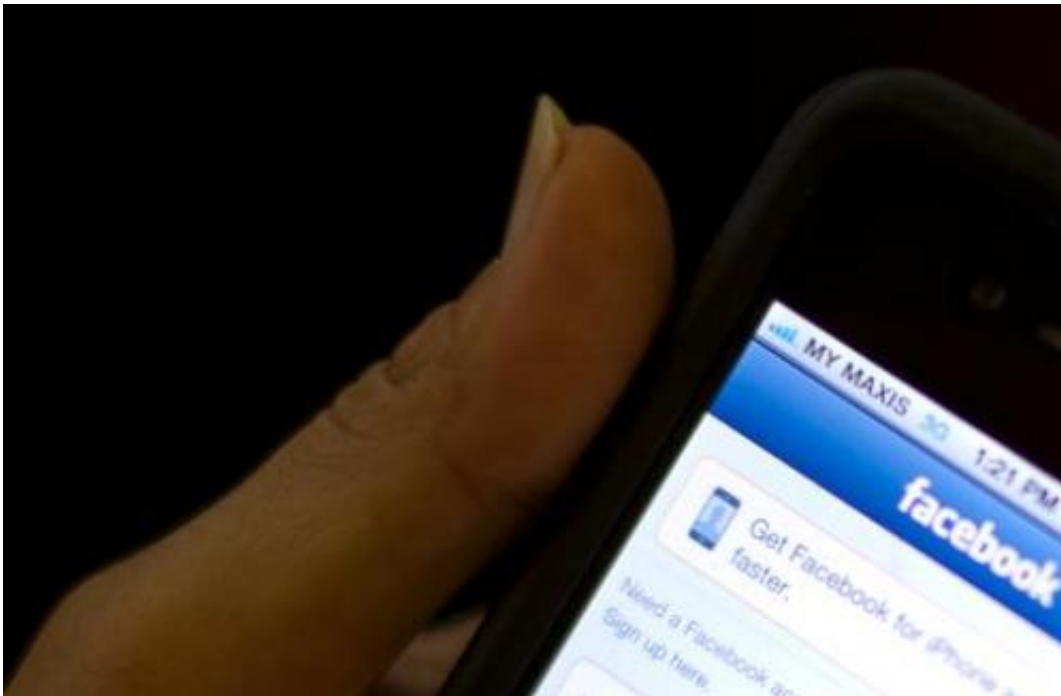


# Facebook: ad policy unchanged, users in control

November 15 2013

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A girl logs into Facebook on her smartphone in Kuala Lumpur on May 15, 2012.

Facebook said Friday that ads on the social network featuring user endorsements and pictures were nothing new, and that members remain in control of their own content and images.

The company's chief privacy officer Erin Egan, in a blog post responding to complaints about user-picture ads, said the policies of the billion-member social network had not changed but that Facebook

needed to explain things better.

The new policy language posted earlier this year by Facebook led to a flurry of protests from privacy activists, who claimed the policy could turn users' data and pictures into advertising, often without their knowledge.

The policy update noted that when a Facebook member clicks on a "like" button, that could be used in advertising, and could feature a picture of that user endorsing a product or service.

Facebook unveiled the changes as part of a settlement of a class action suit over the use of user names and images in so-called "sponsored stories."

But Egan said: "We want you to know that nothing about this update has changed our advertising policies and practices. We heard this question a lot so we want to be clear. The goal of the update was to clarify language, not to change policies or practices."

Egan said that Facebook users can control who sees their "likes" and endorsements through their [privacy settings](#).

"We want to reiterate that you own the content you post on Facebook," she wrote.

"This includes your photos. We don't share your private posts with others without your permission. When you post, you choose how to share and with whom, and we respect your choice. This has long been key to our terms and policies and has not changed as a result of this update."

Egan provided an example of a hypothetical user named Krishna who "liked" a merchant called Sweet Stop.

"Once he liked it, her friends were eligible to see that 'like' elsewhere on Facebook," she wrote.

"If Krishna only allowed family members to see that he 'liked' Sweet Stop—then only his family members could see this ad paired with the 'like' story. So, at the end of the day, Krishna —and you—have control over the information sharing on this type of ad. You can also control this by opting out of social advertising."

In September, several privacy organizations complained in a letter to the Federal Trade Commission that the policy would "dramatically expand the use of personal information for advertising purposes," and could violate a 2011 consent decree with the US consumer protection watchdog.

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