

Facebook's privacy update: 5 things to know

November 14 2014, by Barbara Ortutay



In this Wednesday, June 11, 2014 photo, a man walks past a sign in an office on the Facebook campus in Menlo Park, Calif. One more time, Facebook is trying to simplify its lengthy privacy policy—and make it much shorter—to explain how it targets advertisements to its 1.35 billion users. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)

Facebook is once again trying to simplify its privacy policy, largely to address criticisms that it's too complex and lengthy for the average user.

Laid out with illustrations into short subsections, the new [policy](#) explains what types of [information](#) Facebook collects and how it uses the data. The new policy is 70 percent shorter than the old one.

Many of the changes are cosmetic, designed to make the policy easier to digest. Still, it helps to go through it to get an idea of all the things Facebook knows about you.

Users have until Nov. 20 to comment on the proposed changes or ask questions. A finalized version will take effect soon after that.

Here are five things to remember about Facebook's data policies.

— LOCATION, LOCATION

Facebook only recently began allowing businesses to advertise to users based on their specific location. Previously, ads were targeted based on the "current city" listed on the profile. Both the old policy and the new one note that the company can access your [location information](#) based on your smartphone's GPS information. The new policy points out that Bluetooth and Wi-Fi signals can also reveal device locations.

Besides that, Facebook can also collect information from the photos you share on the site, including where they were taken.

— BEYOND FACEBOOK

Facebook doesn't just track what you do on its site. It also collects information about your activities when you're off Facebook. For example, if you use Facebook to log in to outside websites and [mobile apps](#), the company will receive data about those. It also gets information about your activity on other businesses it owns, such as WhatsApp and Instagram, in accordance with those services' privacy policies.

— AD TARGETING

Unless you decline targeting, or opt out, companies whose websites you

visit off Facebook can also show you ads on Facebook. For example, a website can use browser cookies to record who visited it. It can then ask Facebook to show ads to these visitors—both on and off Facebook. If you want to opt out in the U.S., you can visit this website:

aboutads.info/choices

— ALL EYES ON YOU

Everything is fair game. Facebook explains it best: "We collect the content and other information you provide when you use our Services, including when you sign up for an account, create or share, and message or communicate with others." Plus, Facebook says it also collects information about how you use Facebook, "such as the types of content you view or engage with or the frequency and duration of your activities."

— SHOPPING SPREE?

Facebook is testing a tool to let people buy things directly through its site. If you decide to do this, Facebook will collect information about your transaction, including your [credit card number](#) and billing and shipping address.

Facebook's updated data policy: on.fb.me/1wYGJjt

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