Facebook to block access to non-members in Belgium

December 2 2015

Facebook said December 2, 2015 it will block access to its site by non-registered users while it battles a court order preventing it from tracking the Internet behavior of such users

Facebook on Wednesday said it would block access to its website by non-members in Belgium, as it battles a court order to stop tracking Internet users who do not have accounts with the US social media giant.

The decision follows a so-far fruitless attempt to strike a deal with

Belgium's privacy watchdog after it lodged a legal complaint over Facebook's tracking of Internet users when they visit pages on the site or click "like" or "share", even if they are not members.

Once the court order is officially received, "people without Facebook accounts in Belgium will have to log in to Facebook before they can see Facebook pages and other content," the California-based firm said in an emailed statement.

"This means people without a Facebook account will need to create and log into a Facebook account to view this content," it said.

If carried out, it would be the first time Facebook would block access to visitors in the row over the use of so-called cookies, widely used tracking devices that follow a user's Internet activity.

Facebook has vowed to appeal against last month's court decision, but said in the meantime it would "fully comply" with the Belgian Privacy Commission. Defying the ruling would cost Facebook fines of up to 250,000 euros ($269,000) a day.

The head of the Belgian watchdog, Willem Debeuckelaere, accused Facebook of "playing games".

"We wish that Facebook would simply stop following people that are not members of the social network. It's as simple as that," he told Belga news agency.

Facebook insists the cookie—which it calls the "datr" cookie—is secure and a crucial tool to protect users against hacking attacks on its network.

"We had hoped to address the BPC's concerns in a way that allowed us to continue using a security cookie that protected Belgian people from

more than 33,000 takeover attempts in the past month," Facebook said.

© 2015 AFP

Citation: Facebook to block access to non-members in Belgium (2015, December 2) retrieved 23 April 2024 from https://phys.org/news/2015-12-facebook-block-access-non-members-belgium.html