

Britain says Facebook must go further in data scandal

March 22 2018, by Robin Millard



Britain's culture minister says Mark Zuckerberg's plans to fix problems at his social media company aren't going 'far enough'

Britain's culture minister said Thursday that Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg's plan to fix problems at the world's biggest social media

network did not go far enough.

A scandal erupted last weekend when a whistleblower revealed that British data consultant Cambridge Analytica (CA) had created psychological profiles on 50 million Facebook users via a personality prediction app.

Matt Hancock, Britain's minister for culture and digital, said it should not be down to companies such as Facebook to set their own rules on [data privacy](#).

"Zuckerberg has apologised and said that they are going to make some changes, but frankly I don't think those changes go far enough," he told BBC radio.

"It shouldn't be for a [company](#) to decide what is the appropriate balance between privacy and innovation and use of data, those rules should be set by society as a whole and so set by parliament.

"That's the approach that we are taking—the big tech companies need to abide by the law and we are strengthening the law."

Zuckerberg has vowed to "step up" to fix problems at the social media giant, as it fights a snowballing scandal over the hijacking of [personal data](#) from millions of its users.

He announced new steps to rein in the leakage of data to outside developers and third-party apps, while giving users more control over their information.

'Huge' trust breach: Facebook

The scandal has wiped out around \$60 billion (48 billion euros) of

Facebook's market value since Monday, Bloomberg news reported.



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Chris Cox, Facebook's chief product officer, said the situation was "extraordinarily serious" for the company.

Facebook says it discovered last week that CA may not have deleted the data as it certified.

CA "should never have had access to any of this data" and Facebook felt "absolutely" misled by the British firm, Cox told BBC radio.

"We asked them multiple times and they told us they didn't have anything. Which is really infuriating.

"It was a huge breach of trust where lots of data may have made its way into the wrong hands."

He said Facebook's business model relied upon the company protecting people's data so they can share information securely.

Restoring public trust in Facebook depends on the next steps and will "take a long time, but it's something we're committed to", said Cox.

World Wide Web inventor Tim Berners-Lee described the scandal as a "serious moment for the web's future".

The British scientist said it was time for all internet users to "build a web that reflects our hopes and fulfils our dreams more than it magnifies our fears and deepens our divisions".

"I can imagine Mark Zuckerberg is devastated that his creation has been abused and misused," he wrote on Twitter, adding that "some days I have the same feeling".

"I would say to him: You can fix it. It won't be easy but if companies work with governments, activists, academics and web users we can make sure platforms serve humanity."

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Citation: Britain says Facebook must go further in data scandal (2018, March 22) retrieved 16 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-03-britain-facebook-scandal.html>

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