

Facebook 'not aware of any abuse' of data by phone makers

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Facebook has come under scrutiny over its past handling of its users personal data

Facebook said Monday that it does not know of any privacy abuse by cellphone makers who years ago were able to gain access to personal

data on users and their friends.

The [social media](#) leader said it "disagreed" with the conclusions of a New York Times report that found that the [device](#) makers could access information on Facebook users' friends without their explicit consent.

Facebook enabled device makers to interface with it at a time when it was building its service and they were developing new smartphone and social media technology.

But the Times said the access continued even after Facebook agreed with the Federal Trade Commission in 2011 to better protect data and only share it after obtaining consumers' express consent.

Facebook, which came under attack early this year over British political consultant Cambridge Analytica's harvesting of [personal data](#) on 87 million Facebook users and their friends, did not deny the Times story but said it "disagreed" with the issues raised.

Before now-ubiquitous apps standardized the social media experience on smartphones, some 60 device makers like Amazon, Apple, Blackberry, HTC, Microsoft and Samsung worked with Facebook to adapt interfaces for the Facebook website to their own phones, the company said.

"We controlled them tightly from the get-go," said Ime Archibong, VP of Product Partnerships, in a statement.

"Partners could not integrate the user's Facebook features with their devices without the user's permission," he said.

"Friends' information, like photos, was only accessible on devices when people made a decision to share their information with those friends," he said.

Moreover, he added, "We are not aware of any abuse by these companies."

But the Times said that the user permissions were not always explicit as required by the 2011 consent decree with the FTC.

In addition, it said, its research showed that some device makers "could retrieve personal information even from users' friends who believed they had barred any sharing."

Facebook said it is winding up the interface arrangements with device makers as the company's smartphone apps dominate the service.

But the report raised concerns that massive databases on users and their friends—including personal data and photographs—could be in the hands of device makers as it did with Cambridge Analytica.

Cambridge Analytica obtained the data it had without Facebook's permission and used it to help the election campaign of US President Donald Trump.

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