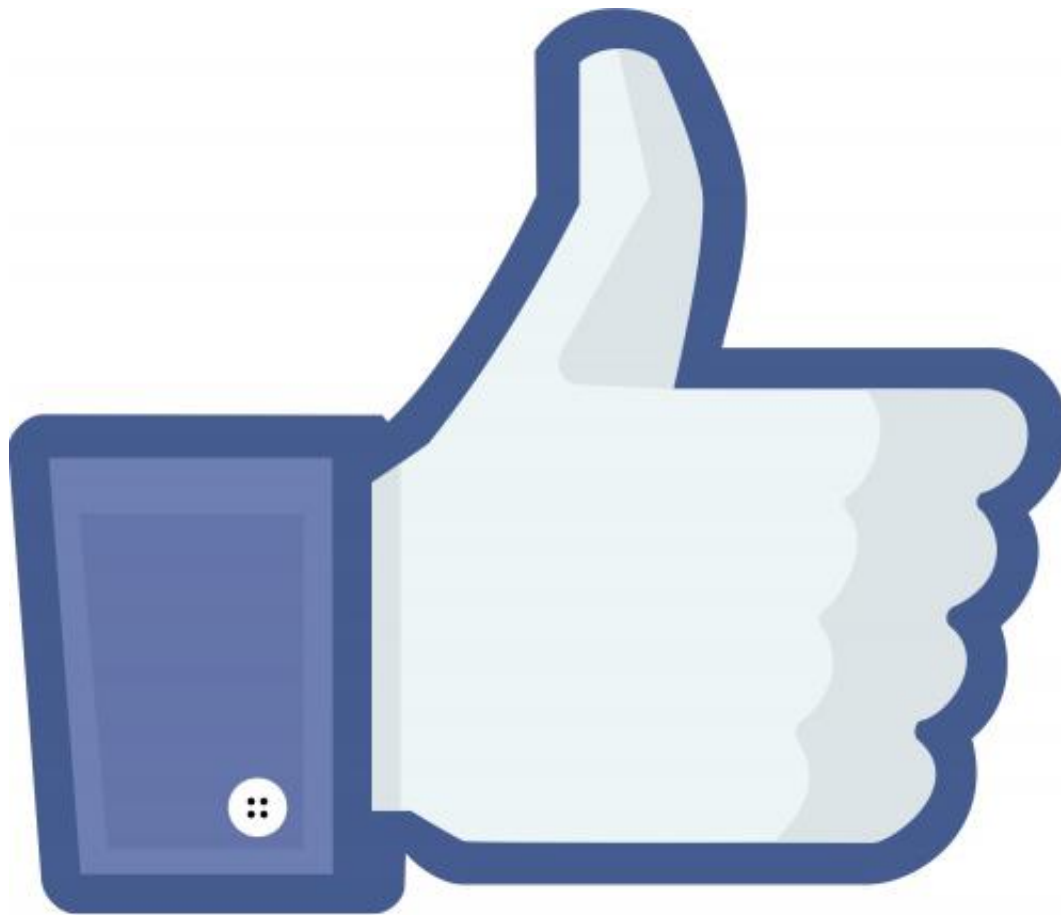


Facebook does, indeed, want to track your calls on device

October 19 2018, by Jefferson Graham



Facebook wants to you to spend \$199 to \$349 to install its version of a connected, talking video speaker—such as Amazon's Echo—into your

home. It has a camera that follows you as you move for video calls and the ability to track what you're doing.

Stop the laughter for a moment. This isn't a joke. Facebook is serious.

In announcing the Portal product (as in "Hey, Portal,") Facebook bent over backward to assure consumers that it takes your privacy seriously.

That strategy took several steps backward Wednesday with the admission that yes, indeed, Facebook did want to track your calls and sell ads based on the data elsewhere on Facebook.

"We may use this information to inform the ads we show you across our platforms," Facebook told tech news site ReCode. " Other general usage data, such as aggregate usage of apps, etc., may also feed into the information that we use to serve ads."

That's a far cry from what Facebook has been telling consumers on the Portal website.

"Portal was created with privacy, safety and security in mind," the company says. "Facebook doesn't listen to, view or keep the contents of your Portal [video calls](#). Your Portal conversations stay between you and the people you're calling."

Except that Facebook also notes who you've called, where both parties live and how often the two of you interact with one another.

Jessica Groopman, an analyst with Kaleido Insights, says Facebook's admission "certainly won't help them build consumer trust."

The Portal product is slated for a Nov. 14 release, where it will compete with two video speakers from Amazon (the latest edition of the Echo

Show, for \$229 and in stores now, and the new Google Home Hub, \$149 and set for release on Oct. 22.

In attempting to compete, Facebook will be the new kid on the block versus two companies with long histories of consumer facing. Both Amazon and Google have their products prominently displayed at retail stores such as Best Buy and Target, for instance.

Groopman says selling the Portal will "be a tough road" for Facebook. "Not only are they not in the smart speaker category, they're also suffering from trust issues that others don't have."

We reached out to Facebook for comment but didn't get a reply.

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