

Mark Zuckerberg talks privacy, accidentally disses Facebook Portal

February 22 2019, by Levi Sumagaysay, The Mercury News



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Talking about the future of technology, which is Mark Zuckerberg's personal challenge this year, can be hard, as the Facebook CEO has found out over the years—whether it's before Congress or on television.

So it seems almost inevitable that in a nearly two-hour conversation with Harvard Law Professor Jonathan Zittrain about privacy, regulations, governance and more, Zuckerberg had an oops moment.

As the two Mr. Zs discussed encryption last week at the Facebook CEO's alma mater—the video of which Zuckerberg posted Wednesday—Zuckerberg said: "Messaging is like people's [living room](#). I think we definitely don't want a society where there's a camera in everyone's living room."

"Facebook has a camera that could go in your living room," Zittrain pointed out. That camera is in Facebook's Portal, a voice-activated video-calling device that the company started selling in November.

As the audience of Harvard University students laughed, Zuckerberg quickly added, "although that would be encrypted. Portal works on Messenger, so if we go toward encryption on Messenger, then that will be fully encrypted."

The conversation was the first of what Zuckerberg says will be "a series of discussions" he will host as part of his personal challenge, which he publicly shares each year. A Facebook spokeswoman said Wednesday the company has no information about when the next conversation will occur, or where.

Zuckerberg said he sees a clear trend for more private communication, and that his inclination is toward full encryption for all the messaging services Facebook owns: WhatsApp, where messaging is already encrypted, plus Messenger, which doesn't turn on encryption by default, and Instagram. He acknowledged common concerns about encryption that Zittrain brought up: that there will be crimes left unsolved or not prevented if [law enforcement](#) or other parties cannot access private messages.

The two men also discussed Facebook's goal of establishing a content review board, a plan it announced last month. Zuckerberg foresees the board—which would be responsible for reviewing the company's toughest and perhaps most controversial decisions—as one whose power even he wouldn't be able to challenge.

"We make a lot of decisions on content enforcement," Zuckerberg said. "If I weren't CEO of this company, I wouldn't want to see these decisions concentrated with any individual."

Facebook is working with experts on a pilot, its CEO said, that can grow into "something that can provide greater accountability and oversight."

"It's institution-building," Zuckerberg said. "It's going to have real power. I won't be able to make a decision that overturns what they say. But the stakes are high, so we have to do it right."

The tech giant said during its announcement of the board last month that it would take the next six months to talk with experts, solicit proposals and review input before establishing the board.

Other topics Zuckerberg and Zittain talked about include how Facebook is trying to fight [fake news](#), the company's business model and how Zuckerberg sees his company's role in the world—amid calls to break up the Menlo Park company, which some critics say has grown too powerful.

"A reason why I think people of my generation got into technology is because we believe that technology gives individuals power and isn't massively centralizing," he said. "Now you've built a bunch of big companies in the process, but I think what has largely happened is that individuals today have more voice, more ability to affiliate with who they want and stay connected with people."

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Citation: Mark Zuckerberg talks privacy, accidentally disses Facebook Portal (2019, February 22) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2019-02-zuckerberg-privacy-accidentally-disses-facebook.html>

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