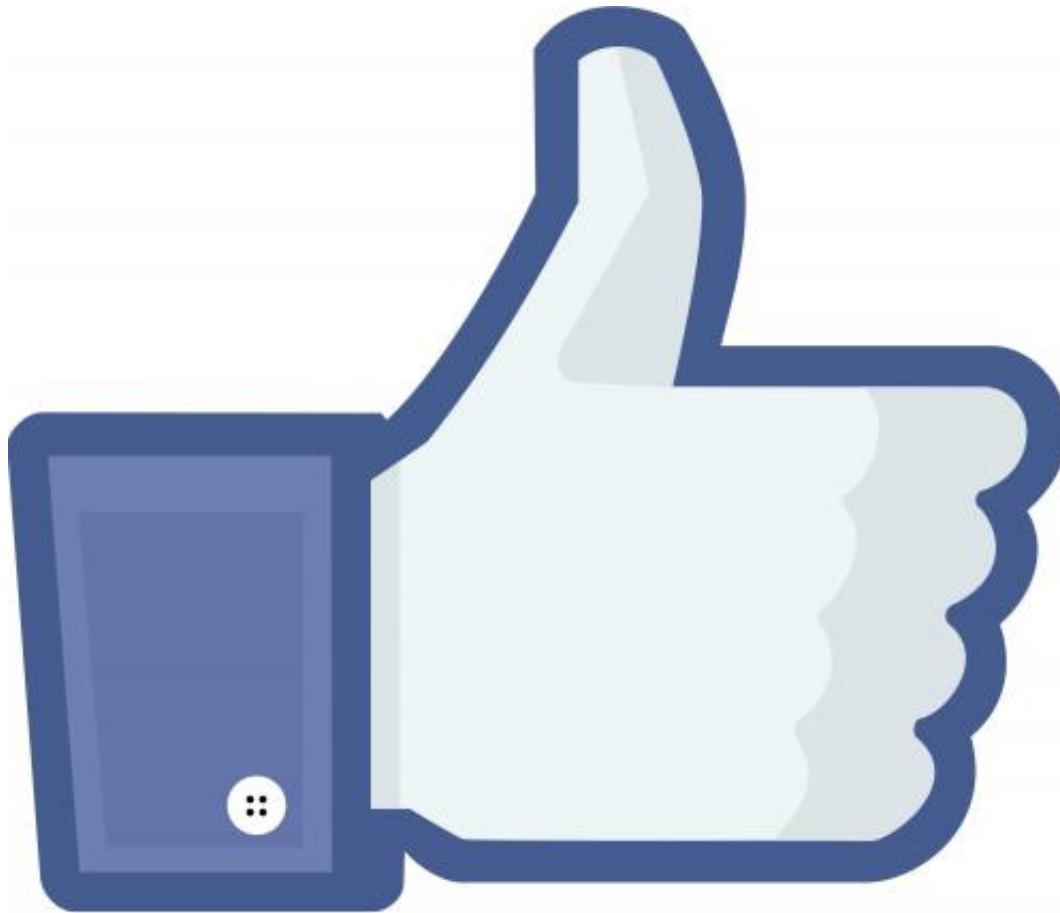


No, Facebook doesn't secretly listen via your microphone to target ads at you

April 12 2018, by Elizabeth Weise, Usa Today



Whatever you might have heard, Facebook doesn't listen in on everything you do through the microphone on your phone, mining the

information for clues on what ads to send you.

"No," CEO Mark Zuckerberg told members of Congress on Tuesday, addressing a conspiracy theory that doesn't seem to want to die.

The theory has been floating around since at least 2016. It posits that Facebook surreptitiously records audio using the microphones on users' [smart phones](#), then uses [voice recognition software](#) to turn it into searchable terms that the site can use to place ads in the user's news feed.

An example would be if someone were discussing lawn mowers near their phone, then suddenly started seeing lawn mower ads in their Facebook news feed.

Facebook addressed the rumor in June 2016 in a post, saying this:

"Facebook does not use your phone's [microphone](#) to inform ads or to change what you see in News Feed. Some recent articles have suggested that we must be listening to people's conversations in order to show them relevant ads. This is not true. We show ads based on people's interests and other profile information—not what you're talking out loud about."

However, the rumor isn't going away. In a hearing before Congress on the Cambridge Analytica scandal Tuesday, Sen. Gary Peters of Michigan asked Zuckerberg, "Yes or no, does Facebook use audio obtained from mobile devices to enrich personal information about users?"

"No," Zuckerberg responded.

He continued, "Senator, let me get clear on this, you're talking about this [conspiracy theory](#) that gets passed around that we listen to what's going on on your microphone and use that for ads. To be clear, we do allow people to take videos on their devices and share those, and videos have

audio, so we do while you're taking a [video](#), record that and use that to make the service is better by making sure your videos have audio, but I think that is pretty clear. But I just wanted to make sure I was exhaustive there."

For those who might still be concerned, a simple solution is to go into phone settings and turn off the permissions that allow the Facebook app to access the microphone. Note that this will make it impossible to record live videos with sound on Facebook, so you'll need to turn it back on should you want to do so.

Instructions on cutting the link:

For iPhone users, go to Settings >> Privacy >> Microphone >> look for Facebook, then toggle off the setting that allows the Facebook app to access the microphone.

For recent Android versions go to Settings >> Apps >> Facebook >> Permissions, then toggle off the setting that allows the Facebook app to access the microphone.

©2018 USA Today

Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Citation: No, Facebook doesn't secretly listen via your microphone to target ads at you (2018, April 12) retrieved 27 July 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-04-facebook-doesnt-secretly-microphone-ads.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.