

Facebook Collects Data On Non-Users And Uses Data To Manipulate Politics, U.K. Report Reveals

Even if you don't have an account with Facebook your phone might be transmitting information to the social network's servers, and there isn't much you can do about it.

TECHNOLOGY

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Apart from being known to drain the battery, Facebook's mobile app reportedly "drains" a lot more from Android phones.

According to a report published by the U.K.'s *Register* today, **Facebook collects data on non-**

users, and then transmits it to the social network's servers.

In other words, you don't need to have a Facebook account in order to have your data mined by Mark Zuckerberg's company.

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The app, which comes pre-installed on many Android phones, collects and transmits data itself. What's more,

according to *The Register*, it is impossible to turn off background data or uninstall Facebook's app.

"I don't have, and have never had, a Facebook account," *The Register's* tipster, who wished to remain anonymous, said. Still, the fact that he has never had a Facebook account, doesn't seem to have stopped the social network from mining his data.

The Facebook app, a pre-installed system app that cannot be removed, transmits "mysterious information in the background back to Facebook's servers."

The Register's tipster has, he said, tried turning off background data, repeatedly, but to no avail.

"Since these are system apps, they can't be uninstalled. I can't even disable many of them. When I uninstall updates on these apps and disable their access to use data in the background, within minutes they have all somehow turned their ability to use background data back on and have reinstalled all the updates that I manually uninstalled."

The three apps in question, Facebook, Facebook App Installer, and Facebook App Manager, “insist” on using background data, the tipster noted, and this cannot be disabled on his Sprint LG.

Facebook has published [instructions on how to disable updates](#), and therefore background information collecting on Android phones, but, on the tipster’s Sprint LG, the option to disable updates is disabled.

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Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg testified before the U.S. Congress in April, which is when the question of collecting data on consumers who aren't registered as users had first come up.

During Zuckerberg's testimony, according to *Bloomberg*, Representative Ben Lujan, a New Mexico Democrat, asserted that the social network creates "shadow profiles," **mining data from non-**

users in the process. According to the same publication, Facebook creates these “shadow profiles” by accessing data from active users’ inboxes and saved contacts.

Zuckerberg responded that his company does this for “security purposes,” in order to prevent bad actors from gathering public information, such as names, from Facebook users.

In a statement supplied to *The Register*, a Facebook spokesperson said that Facebook has partnered with mobile manufacturers to pre-install their apps on smartphones with Android operating systems in order to “help people have the best experience on Facebook right out of the box and during the life of the device.”

According to *Androidpit*, most pre-installed smartphone apps, also known as bloatware, can be uninstalled, deleted, or at least hidden as long as the user has **root access** (privileged control), the Android equivalent of iPhone jailbreaking.