

WEBSITES DELETE FACEBOOK BUTTON AS FACEBOOK IS EXPOSED AS A PRIVACY ABUSER AND PROPAGANDA SLUT

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Until about a month ago, shoppers on [Dell's](#) website looking for a new laptop could log in using their [Facebook](#) credentials to avoid creating a new username and password. That option is now [gone](#).

Dell isn't alone. Other big brands, including [Best Buy](#), [Ford Motor](#), Pottery Barn, [Nike](#), Patagonia, [Match](#) and [Amazon's](#) video-streaming service Twitch have removed the ability to sign on with Facebook. It's a marked departure from just a few years ago, when the Facebook login was plastered all over the internet, often alongside buttons that let you sign in with [Google](#), [Twitter](#) or LinkedIn.

Jen Felch, Dell's chief digital and chief information officer, said people stopped using social logins, for reasons that include concerns over security, privacy and data-sharing.

"We really just looked at how many people were choosing to use their social media identity to sign in, and that just has shifted over time," Felch said. "One thing that we see across the industry is more and more security risks or account takeovers, whether that's Instagram or Facebook or whatever it might be, and I just think we're observing people making a decision to isolate that social media account versus having other connections to it."

The disappearing login is the latest sign of Facebook's diminishing influence on the internet following more than a decade of spectacular growth. In the past year, the company's business has been beset by [Apple's](#) iOS [privacy change](#), which made it harder to target ads, a deteriorating economy, competition from short-video service [TikTok](#), and reputational damage after a whistleblower leaked documents showing Facebook knew of the harm caused by many of its products.

Revenue in the third quarter is expected to drop for a [second straight period](#). Late last year, Facebook changed its name to Meta, reflecting an effort to move the company away from social media and toward a futuristic metaverse, where people work, play and learn in a virtual world. And in a nod to the shift in consumer behavior, Meta [said in July](#) that VR users will be able to access headsets without their Facebook credentials.

A Facebook spokesperson declined to comment for this story.

Representatives from Ford, Patagonia and Twitch declined to comment on why they removed the Facebook button, while Best Buy, Pottery Barn, Nike and Match didn't respond to requests for comment.

Rakesh Soni, CEO of digital identity management firm [LoginRadius](#), said many companies once viewed social logins as an easy-to-use method for consumers to securely access their sites without having to set up dozens of usernames and passwords.

It was supposed to be a win-win-win — for online businesses, the major internet companies and advertisers.

Websites could capitalize on social media's rising popularity and lower the chances that prospective customers would get annoyed and bail before completing a transaction. Facebook and Google would benefit from all the data they would gather about where users were spending their time and the types of stuff they were buying. Advertisers could promote their products more efficiently with better targeting.

'Breach of their personal space'

That love triangle appears to be crumbling. Soni said websites are now seeing less value in the relationship, in large part because consumers have been losing trust in Facebook.

In 2018, it was revealed that the data analytics firm [Cambridge Analytica](#) harvested the personal information of 87 million Facebook profiles and used that data to target ads in the 2016 presidential campaign. During [the Covid-19 pandemic](#), Facebook users were inundated with [misinformation](#) about masks and vaccines. And in the documents released last year by ex-employee Frances Haugen, consumers learned that Facebook knows of the damages its products cause but in many cases doesn't try to rectify them.

Facebook "is a really personal space where people share their birthdays and family pictures," Soni said. "People started feeling like it's a breach of their personal space."

Stephanie Liu, a marketing analyst at Forrester, said she's increasingly talking to companies, particularly retailers in the consumer packaged goods industry, that are "calling me up saying we want to break up with Facebook." Google's login tool is stickier, because "it's a lot harder to break up with Gmail," she said.

Dell still supports Google's social login because it's the "only one that has enough volume," Felch said.

According to a 2022 report from LoginRadius, Google was the most preferred social login among North American consumers, based on an analysis of more than 1,000 websites and apps. Some 38.9% of users preferred the Google login, representing an increase of nearly 1.5 percentage points from 2019. Meanwhile, the percentage of users saying they prefer Facebook fell by more than 5 points during that stretch to 38.7%.

Liu said part of the change in Facebook's appeal was brought about by its own doing. After the Cambridge Analytica scandal, the company "clamped down on how much user data they're willing to share with their partners," Liu said. That means brands have less use for the login tool because they "are getting less information on your users and who they are and how

to reach them outside of Facebook," she added.

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The Facebook login is by no means extinct. Numerous websites from media outlets and news organizations still use it as an option, as do mobile game developers.

But Liu said many companies are looking to cut their reliance on social media services, particularly Facebook.

"It's no small undertaking to make that sort of decision to divorce Facebook," she said.

Login confusion

Marketing tech firm [Buffer](#) used to offer social logins for its clients, who count on the company to manage their various social media accounts.

But as Buffer's user base grew over the years, Tom Redman, the company's director of product, noticed that people would sometimes forget which internet account they used to sign on. As a result, they would inadvertently create multiple Buffer accounts.

"It wasn't uncommon for them to have two or three Buffer accounts by accident," Redman said. Social logins "ultimately just proved to be confusing for customers," he said.

Then there's the data. By letting customers sign on through third parties, Buffer wasn't collecting email addresses, posing a challenge when the company needed to contact users about support issues, marketing and privacy compliance matters.

"We just said, 'Okay, well, let's run an experiment and get rid of social sign-ins and social sign-ups,'" Redman said. The company made the change back in 2019, well before the mass exodus across the web. Redman said the day Buffer pulled the plug "was the day our advocacy team rejoiced the most over the past five or six years."

At wellness company [SnapHabit](#), users of the app can still sign in with Facebook. The company briefly experimented with a kind of passwordless login method known as magic link, but that failed to work, so SnapHabit decided in 2020 to use social logins as well as email as a way for users to sign in.

Jake Bernstein, SnapHabit's co-founder, said that with all the options available to them, users seem to favor Facebook the least. According to his company's data, out of a sample of 10,000 sign-ins, 42.7% of users signed in with Google, 26.5% used Apple, 20.1% signed in via email and just 10.7% used Facebook.

The company was even displaying the Facebook button more prominently than the Apple link or the email option, which could only be accessed via a small "more options" button below the other social logins, Bernstein said.

Soni from LoginRadius said companies have been deterred from Facebook for reasons other than just reputational risk. User growth on the social network has stagnated. At the end of last year, the company had 1.93 billion daily active users, a number that barely ticked up in 2022 to 1.97 billion in the second quarter.

Companies may be asking themselves, "Why the heck should I spend my engineering resources to maintain it?" Soni said. "Why do we even bother to have it if it's not adding much value to my business?"

He also said that several high-profile [data breaches](#) in recent years likely haven't helped.

Dell's Felch said she wasn't sure if privacy concerns led customers to move away from social logins. But the change has corresponded with greater scrutiny of social media companies' business models by regulators, investors and consumers.

"They know everything that we're doing," Felch said, regarding Facebook and its competitors. "Every site that we logged into with a social media account they now know."