

Left-wing New York Times Had Special Access To Left-wing Facebook Data Without Users Knowledge

Joe Simonson | Media Reporter

The New York Times was one of the companies that had access to private user data from Facebook, a key point brushed over in a report released by the paper.

While the [Tuesday bombshell](#) focused on how the information from [Facebook](#) was mainly shared with major tech companies like Microsoft, Amazon and Spotify, The Times was one of nine media organizations that also obtained special access to things like a users' friends lists.

Disclosing such information violated [Facebook's](#) normal privacy rules and was meant to help companies better target consumers, while raising internal advertising revenues, according to the report.

For companies like [The Times](#) and Netflix, access to the data of 2.2 billion people could be a goldmine.

Others, like Spotify, even had the ability to read a Facebook user's private messages between friends, while tech giants like Yahoo could "view streams of friends' posts as recently as this summer," according to the report. Facebook had claimed it ceased such practices years ago. ([RELATED: Facebook and Instagram Campus Evacuated Following Bomb Threat](#))

The Times denied it was "obtaining any data" from Facebook in a statement to its own paper, and offered the following statement to The Daily Caller News Foundation in an email.

"Between September 2008 and mid 2011, The Times offered a feature called TimesPeople that had some integration with Facebook. Those who opted-in could see what Times stories their friends were recommending. Data access granted through that integration is not something we've used since the feature was shuttered in 2011. We were not even aware of the continued access. We are committed to the privacy of our readers and protection of their personal data," a spokesperson said.

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg arrives to testify before a Senate Judiciary and Commerce Committ

As traditional news outlets like The Times continue transitioning into digital media companies, this report raises alarming questions about their future relationship with tech giants like Facebook. While reporters have remained diligent in policing certain conduct by Silicon Valley, the business side of news outlets still have access to tremendous information.

Moreover, if media companies like The Times are potentially being granted special access to things like private Facebook messages, are reporters privy to this kind of information?

To TheDCNF's knowledge, The Times does not have a formal policy on whether its journalists can peruse the extraordinary breadth of information given by social media companies to its business and advertising departments.