



TOPIC OF THE WEEK

APR'18 (29 to 04)

Week: 29th March to 04th April 2018

Topic: Data Privacy Scandal at Facebook

Facebook has been collecting call records and SMS data from Android devices for years. Several Twitter users have reported finding months or years of call history data in their downloadable Facebook data file. A number of Facebook users have been spooked by the recent Cambridge Analytica privacy scandal, prompting them to download all the data that Facebook stores on their account. The results have been alarming for some.

Technical department reports that Facebook has been requesting access to contacts, SMS data, and call history on Android devices to improve its friend recommendation algorithm and distinguish between business contacts and your true personal friendships. Facebook appears to be gathering this data through its Messenger application, which often prompts Android users to take over as the default SMS client.

Facebook has, at least recently, been offering an opt-in prompt that prods users with a big blue button to “continuously upload” contact data, including call and

Week: 29th March to 04th April 2018

text history. It's not clear when this prompt started appearing in relation to the historical data gathering, and whether it has simply been opt-in the whole time. Either way, it's clearly alarmed some who have found call history data stored on Facebook's servers.

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg has announced steps where the company will try and restrict what user data can be accessed by third-party apps. The comments come after scathing criticism of the social network over data leaks, where profiles of nearly 50 million users were illegally harvested by a political firm Cambridge Analytica, which worked for the Trump and Pro-Brexit campaigns.

It has been revealed that a Cambridge University research Aleksandr Kogan used a Facebook personality quiz app called 'This is your Digital Life' to harvest the data of nearly 300,000 users. Kogan also accessed the data of these users' friends for which explicit consent was given. The data was then shared with third parties like Cambridge Analytica, which used it to target and identify users. The Facebook scandal has confirmed that

Week: 29th March to 04th April 2018

users will need to carefully examine their privacy settings on the social network.

Here's how users can check which apps have access to their Facebook data:

An app like Zomato or Myntra can get access to some Facebook data from your profile, once you, the user give consent for the same. For instance, if you decide to rely on a Facebook login for using a particular app, then some part of your publicly available data is shared with them. This could be your name, date of birth, profile picture, email address, gender, age etc.

The Facebook settings for Apps will also allow users to control whether other users can see what app they are using on the network. For instance, if you use AirBnb via Facebook, then you can make sure that this information is not shown to others, not even those on your friends list. For each app, you can choose 'Only Me' as the option.

Week: 29th March to 04th April 2018

Even after you have deleted the app, Facebook will also turn off access for unused apps (if a user has not opened an app in the last three months). The social network will also change Login and reduce the data that an app can request and limit it to only name, profile photo and email address. Requesting any other data will require Facebook approval.

The British-based political consultancy firm says its work with data and research from Facebook allowed Mr. Trump to win with a narrow margin of "40,000 votes" in three states, providing victory in the Electoral College system despite losing the popular vote by over three million votes, according to Slate, an online magazine.

The data let the Trump campaign know more than perhaps anyone has ever known about Facebook users, creating targeted ads and messaging that could play on their individual biases, fears and loves - effectively creating a bond between them and the candidate.

Week: 29th March to 04th April 2018

The data collected via Dr Kogan's app generated an incredible 4,000 or more data points on each US voter, according to Mr. Alexander Nix, Cambridge Analytica's chief executive before he was suspended.

Simply put, the campaign could put out messages, news and images via Facebook and other social media platforms that were finely targeted to press the right buttons on an individual that would push him into Mr. Trump's voter base. For Mr. Trump, it worked.

Shares of Facebook cratered as much as 6 percent Monday after the Federal Trade Commission announced it is investigating the company's data practices in the wake of the Cambridge Analytica leak of 50 million users' information.

Facebook is facing questions over its data handling following reports that research firm Cambridge Analytica improperly gained access to the personal data of more than 50 million Facebook users. Facebook's stock shed more than 13 percent in the five days of trading following the initial reports.

Week: 29th March to 04th April 2018

Facebook on 25th March Sunday took out full page ads in newspapers in the US and UK apologizing for the data leaks with regard to political firm Cambridge Analytica. Facebook took out the ads in *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post* in the US and in UK the list of newspapers includes *The Sunday Times*, *Mail on Sunday*, *Sunday Mirror*, *Sunday Express*, *The Observer* and *Sunday Telegraph*. Facebook's ad apologizes over the data leaks, and is signed by CEO Mark Zuckerberg at the end.

"We have a responsibility to protect your information. If we can't, we don't deserve it," is the headline of the ad.

The apology also mentions how Facebook will be investigating every single app which had access to large amount of data before they fixed this.

Week: 29th March to 04th April 2018

Suggested Reading:

- ✓ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-03-26/facebook-mark-zuckerberg-apologises-for-data-breach/9585938>
- ✓ <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/internet/data-breach-how-will-the-biggest-scandal-that-facebook-is-mired-in-affect-its-credibility-in-india/articleshow/63446048.cms>
- ✓ <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/03/23/facebook-privacy-scandal-has-a-plus-thousands-of-new-jobs-ai-cant-do.html>