



Facebook Exec Says Ad Transparency Tool Will Be in Effect During Abortion Referendum

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What Google, Facebook, and Twitter really know about you

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April 21, 2018 3:00am

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AUSTRALIANS still don't know just how much of their lives are being tracked, recorded, and used by the world's biggest technology companies, social media experts warned yesterday, but the Facebook data scandal has been a "wake-up call" for them to ask more questions.

The warning came as new research showed two in five Australians were now "nervous" about social media companies accessing their personal information, while others simply wanted more transparency about how their details were being used.

The Pureprofile study also showed more than one in four Australians had considered closing their Facebook account over the recent scandal that saw personal information siphoned from up to 87 million accounts and sold to influence elections.

But Pureprofile chief executive Nic Jones said online privacy concerns reached further than just Facebook, as other tech giants also collected and exploited users' personal information for profit.


"A lot of people didn't know so many entities were using their data, and that Facebook was not only sharing their information but their friends' information as well," he said.

"I don't think they understand the full value of their data yet but they're now learning what's being shared about them and what that means."

The company's survey showed 41 per cent of Australians were "nervous" tech firms were accessing their personal details, and 28 per cent said they only wanted to share their information "on their own terms".

Focus Cyber Group security expert Thomas Jreige said many consumers might still be alarmed by the scope of information collected on them, from where they lived, where they worked, and what they purchased, to their closest friends and what goods they intended to buy in future.

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Facebook

What it knows: Your name, gender, and birthdate, your friends, your current location, places you've been, websites you've visited, messages you've sent, photos you've taken, brands you've liked, advertisements you've viewed, games you've played, when you've logged into Facebook, what devices you use, and, in some cases, who you phone or message, how often you do it, and when you do it.

Google

What it knows: In addition to the basics — name, gender, birthday, phone number, email address — Google knows what you've searched the web to find, what apps you visit on an Android phone, what physical locations you've visited, where you work, where you live, your transport preferences, what online videos you've watched and, if you've used a Google Home speaker, what you've asked the Assistant or when you go to bed at night (based on when you ask your lights to turn off).

Twitter

What it knows: Twitter began tracking users' web habits in May last year and now keeps 30 days of their web history. It also identifies your interests, knows your name, gender, birthdate, email address, what devices you use, where you were when you used them, some of the apps on your smartphone, and it could have saved the contact details of all of your friends.

Instagram

What it knows: Instagram is owned by Facebook and, if you've linked the two accounts, it can use your information collected by Facebook, including your gender, age, the websites you visit, your current and past locations, and what brands you've visited or liked.

Amazon

What it knows: Amazon knows where you live, where you work (if you've had items delivered there), your name, your credit card details, what you buy, what you've considered buying, what you'd like to buy in future, what you thought of your purchases, what you like to read, how long you take to read it, your location, the devices you use and, if you use an Amazon Echo smart speaker, it will know what you search for, your favourite sports or songs, and what connected devices you use.

Originally published as [What Google and Facebook really know](#)



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