

Calls for Mark Zuckerberg's Removal From Facebook as Mass User Spying Exposed Company caught selling secret contracts giving access to users' private calls

By: Jay Greenberg

Documents reveal Mark Zuckerberg's Facebook sold access to users' private calls © press

Documents reveal Mark Zuckerberg's Facebook sold access to users' private calls. Facebook executives and shareholders are calling for founder Mark Zuckerberg to be removed as CEO as documents emerge that show the company sold direct access to users' personal data, allowing brands to spy on private phone calls and texts. The practices were exposed late on Wednesday when British MPs revealed documents containing emails and memos between staff as part of the ongoing investigation into election interference by the social media giant. The documents have exposed social network for secretly selling direct access to users' devices through apps, allowing third parties to spy on users' calls and texts, outside of Facebook, and without the person's consent or knowledge. The 250-page report was published by MP Damian Collins who is leading the UK investigation into the spread of fake news and propaganda from foreign entities on the platform. The document contains private messages and secret emails between Facebook staff, including Mr. Zuckerberg. The communications revealed that Facebook signed backdoor deals to give companies such as Netflix and

AirBnB special access to user data and allowed them to spy on Android users' phone calls and text messages. Have your say - ↓ Hit the comments below ↓ Former workers have been speaking out to describe a "toxic and hostile" atmosphere at the Internet juggernaut, which has been battling scandal after scandal recently, as mass user data misuse and politically biased censorship policies have been exposed. Speaking to BuzzFeed News, a former senior employee said that workers are desperate for a change of leadership. "People are hoping for a Sundar or Dara moment," the worker said referring to Google's chief Sundar Pichai and Uber's new boss Dara Khosrowshahi.

TRENDING: Illegal Immigrants Seek Asylum at Pelosi Home She Has Police Remove Them Another senior staff member said employees fear being scolded by enraged bosses who are "spouting full-blown anti-media rhetoric, saying that the press is ganging up on Facebook." The source revealed how staff are turning on the firm from within, saying: "People now have burner phones to talk sh*t about the company - not even to reporters, just to other employees." Sources say staff are at rock bottom, adding: "It's the bunker mentality. "These people have been under siege for 600 days now. "They're getting tired, getting cranky - the only survival strategy is to quit or fully buy in." facebook executives want mark zuckerberg out following scandal after scandal © press Facebook executives want Mark Zuckerberg out following scandal after scandal According to the Daily Mail, a Facebook spokesman last night admitted: "This a challenging time." The reports pile even more pressure on Mr. Zuckerberg as MP Collins published the 250-page document containing secret communications between Facebook staff. Facebook stock has plunged in recent months and is set to take a beating when the New York Stock Exchange opens Thursday

morning after a hiatus for George H.W. Bush's funeral. Mr. Collins used parliamentary privilege to seize the documents - which had been made secret by a US judge - from the founder of US app developer Six4Three, Ted Kramer, who had them as part of a legal case against Facebook. In an extraordinary move when Mr. Kramer was passing through London in November, Mr. Collins had him escorted to Parliament and threatened to imprison him if he didn't hand them over. The documents reveal: Facebook programmed its Android app to see users call and text records in which it admitted was a 'pretty high-risk thing to do from a PR perspective' Facebook aggressively stopped rivals from accessing its users' data to maintain dominance, causing many apps to fail CEO Mark Zuckerberg personally approved a decision to block Twitter's app Vine from accessing users' Facebook friends lists Mr. Zuckerberg said he was 'skeptical' that apps with access Facebook users' data would pass data on, as then happened in the Cambridge Analytica scandal Facebook used Onavo app it acquired to spy on users' phone usage, apparently without their knowledge, to identify competitors such as Whatsapp to buy out The messages discuss changes that Facebook made to its site in 2015 which limited apps' access to users' Facebook friends. The app ThisIsYourDigitalLife exploited this feature to get information from millions of Facebook profiles despite only having around 300,000 direct users, which it later sold to political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica. mark zuckerberg refused to meet with british mps saying he s already addressed congress © press Mark Zuckerberg refused to meet with British MPs saying he's already addressed Congress In emails sent ahead of the changes being implemented, Facebook senior staff discussed "whitelisting" several apps - including Lyft, Tinder, and AirBnB - meaning they would keep full access to friend data. One employee proposed only letting companies who

pay a certain amount have access. Konstantinos Papamiltidas, Facebook's director of platform partnerships, said:

"Communicate in one-go to all apps that don't spend that those permission[s] will be revoked. "Communicate to the rest that they need to spend on NEKO [a platform that Facebook uses to sell advertising] \$250k a year to maintain access to the data."

Facebook strongly denied ever selling user data and insisted it only granted these companies "short-term extensions" to

preserve user experience. In another email from Mark

Zuckerberg himself, sent in 2012, he lays out his vision for how Facebook will generate money in the future, including leveraging developers for access to data. the 250 page report was published by mp damian collins who is leading the uk investigation into facebook © press The 250-page report was published by MP

Damian Collins who is leading the UK investigation into Facebook He writes: "I'm getting more on board with locking

down some parts of short-term platform, including friends data and potentially email addresses for mobile apps. "Without

limiting distribution or access to friends who use this app, I don't think we have any way to get developers to pay us at all..." In

another email, sent around the same time, he discusses charging developers a fee for accessing user data - which he

says should "cost a lot of money" - which they can repay to Facebook by buying their advertising or using their payments

service. He writes: "A basic model could be: Login with Facebook is always free, pushing content to Facebook is Airbnb free, reading anything, including friends, costs a lot of money.

"Perhaps on the order of \$0.10/user each year. "For the money that you owe, you can cover it in any of the following ways:

Buy[ing] ads from us in neko or another system. "Run our ads in your app or website (canvas apps already do this). "Use our

payments. Sell your items in our Karma store. "Or if the revenue

we get from those doesn't add up to more than the fees you owe us, then you just pay us the fee directly." Mr. Collins, the chairman of Parliament's Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, said: "Facebook have clearly entered into whitelisting agreements with certain companies, which meant that after the platform changes in 2014/15 they maintained full access to friends data. "It is not clear that there was any user consent for this, nor how Facebook decided which companies should be whitelisted or not. "It is clear that increasing revenues from major app developers was one of the key drivers behind the... changes at Facebook. "The idea of linking access to friends data to the financial value of the developers relationship with Facebook is a recurring feature of the documents." Defending his decision to publish the papers, which contravenes a California judge who ruled they should remain a secret, he added that there was a "considerable public interest." He said Facebook had failed to give "straight answers" to his inquiry after Mark Zuckerberg failed to show up to a grand committee featuring politicians from eight countries last week. mark zuckerberg was empty chaired by the grand committee last week after sending executive richard allan in his place © press Mark Zuckerberg was 'empty chaired' by the grand committee last week after sending executive Richard Allan in his place The dossier includes emails written by Mr. Zuckerberg himself, as well as hundreds of documents about privileged access to data given by Facebook to certain applications. Mr. Collins said: "I believe there is considerable public interest in releasing these documents. "They raise important questions about how Facebook treats users data, their policies for working with app developers, and how they exercise their dominant position in the social media market. "We don't feel we have had straight answers from Facebook on these important issues, which is why

we are releasing the documents. "We need a more public debate about the rights of social media users and the smaller businesses who are required to work with the tech giants. "I hope that our committee investigation can stand up for them."

The leak relates to a court case between Facebook, an app developer called Six4Three and its app Pinkini, which allowed users to find bikini photos among images uploaded by their friends. The app was effectively killed when Facebook updated its privacy settings in 2015, and the company is now suing the social media giant. As part of the legal proceedings, Six4Three was handed a trove of documents from Facebook related to its case but was told to keep them private. They were seized by Collins using an obscure parliamentary rule as a Six4Three executive was passing through London in November. Reacting to the documents being published, a Facebook spokesman said: "As we've said many times, the documents Six4Three gathered for their baseless case are only part of the story and are presented in a way that is very misleading without additional context. "We stand by the platform changes we made in 2015 to stop a person from sharing their friends' data with developers. "Like any business, we had many of internal conversations about the various ways we could build a sustainable business model for our platform. "But the facts are clear: we've never sold people's data." Mr. Zuckerberg was "empty chaired" by the grand committee last week after sent executive Richard Allan for the grilling instead. Facebook had demanded the Six4Three papers published today be handed back without being opened by MPs or published. Six4Three managing director Ted Kramer gave the documents to British authorities after being warned he could be banned from leaving the UK if he refused. facebook executive richard allan has been grilled by world governments in mark zuckerberg s place © press Facebook executive Richard Allan has

been grilled by world governments in Mark Zuckerberg's place. In an extraordinary sequence of events, he ignored three demands for the emails before being personally served by a Serjeant at Arms and meeting Mr. Collins in his Commons office. MPs drew up the "unprecedented" order to seize the documents after discovering that Mr. Kramer was due to visit the UK. Mr. Kramer has claimed in court documents he "panicked" while in the meeting with Mr. Collins and his staff, meaning he copied documents from his cloud storage and onto a USB stick. But after seizing the documents, Mr. Collins said: "Under UK law and parliamentary privilege we can publish papers if we choose to. "As you know we have asked many questions of Facebook about its policies on sharing user data. "I believe these documents may contain important information." In a statement issued after the committee hearing today, Facebook said of the claim that an engineer had flagged concerns about Russians trawling the site for data: "The engineers who had flagged these initial concerns subsequently looked into this further and found no evidence of specific Russian activity." Lord Allan has also urged Mr. Collins not to reveal the documents. He warned Collins yesterday in an email that the documents are "sub judice before a court in California" and are "sealed." Lord Allan is a Liberal Democrat peer and unlike previous Facebook witnesses at the House of Commons is an expert in Parliament's procedures. A US judge in California had ordered the files, obtained from Facebook via a legal discovery process, could not be revealed to the public earlier this year. Mr. Zuckerberg has repeatedly refused to attend the UK Parliament saying that he has already testified to Congress in the US and before the European Union. "It is not possible for Mr. Zuckerberg to be available to all parliaments," the firm said. Facebook said after the documents were seized: "The materials obtained by the DCMS committee are subject to a

protective order of the San Mateo Superior Court restricting their disclosure. "We have asked the DCMS committee to refrain from reviewing them and to return them to counsel or to Facebook. "We have no further comment." facebook sold direct access to users calls and texts to anyone willing to pay © press Facebook sold direct access to users calls and texts to anyone willing to pay What do the Facebook emails say? 1. Facebook planned to let its android app read users' call records in which it admitted was a "pretty high-risk thing to do from a PR perspective." Michael LeBeau (Facebook product manager) wrote on 4 February 2015: "As you know all the growth team is planning on shipping a permissions update on Android at the end of this month. "They are going to include the 'read call log' permission... "This is a pretty high-risk thing to do from a PR perspective but it appears that the growth team will charge ahead and do it." 2. Facebook aggressively stopped rivals from accessing its users' data to maintain dominance, causing many apps to fail. CEO Mark Zuckerberg personally approved a decision to block Twitter's app Vine from accessing users' Facebook friends lists. Justin Osofsky (Facebook vice president) wrote on 24 January 2012: "Twitter launched Vine today which lets you shoot multiple short video segments to make one single, 6-second video... "Unless anyone raises objections, we will shut down their friends API access today. "We've prepared reactive PR, and I will let Jana know our decision." CEO Mark Zuckerberg replied: "Yup, go for it." 3. Mr. Zuckerberg said he was "skeptical" that apps with access Facebook users' data would pass this data on, as then happened in the Cambridge Analytica scandal in 2016 In a 2012 email to Sam Lessin, the company's former VP of Project Management, Mr. Zuckerberg wrote: "I'm generally skeptical that there is as much data leak strategic risk as you think. "I agree there is clear risk on the advertiser side, but I haven't figured out

how that connects to the rest of the platform. "I think we leak info to developers, but I just can't think of any instances where that data has leaked from developer to developer and caused a real issue for us. "Do you have examples of this?" 4. Facebook executives planned to provide user data to apps which paid Facebook a certain amount Konstantinos Papamiltidas, Facebook's director of platform partnerships, ordered: "Communicate to all apps that don't spend that those permission[s] will be revoked. "Communicate to the rest that they need to spend on NEKO [a platform that Facebook uses to sell advertising] \$250k a year to maintain access to the data."

READ MORE: <https://neonnettle.com/features/1594-calls-for-mark-zuckerberg-s-removal-from-facebook-as-mass-user-spying-exposed>

© Neon Nettle