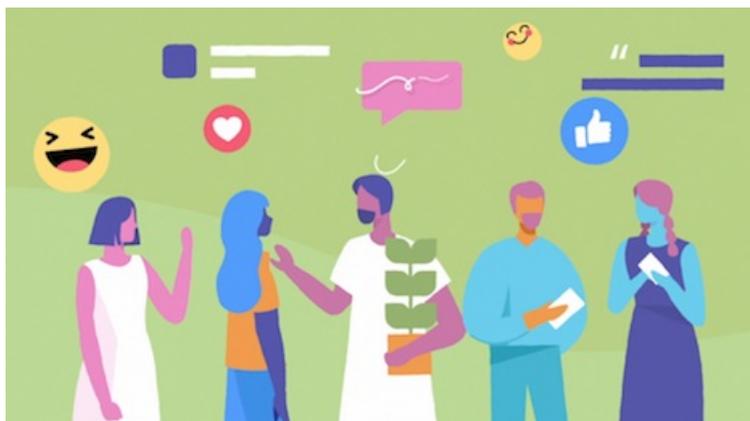


SOFTWARE AND TECHNOLOGY

## Facebook to allow users to clear browsing history

May 1, 2018



Facebook users' data privacy is a topic of focus. Image credit: Facebook

By STAFF REPORTS

In response to consumer demand for more control over their data in the wake of Facebook's Cambridge Analytica scandal, the social network is rolling out more features aimed at improving user privacy.

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During his keynote at Facebook's annual F8 developer conference on May 1, founder Mark Zuckerberg laid out the company's investments aimed at improving users' safety and ability to connect on its platforms. One of these tools will enable consumers to clear their browsing history, which many advertisers rely on for targeting.

### Prioritizing privacy

Political data firm Cambridge Analytica used access to more than 50 million users' personal data to influence the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

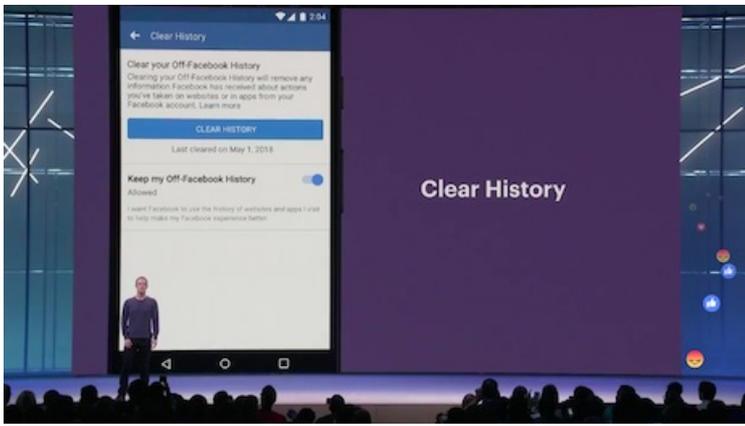
In his address, Mr. Zuckerberg admitted that Cambridge Analytica was a "massive breach of trust."

The Cambridge Analytica scandal has made Facebook so vigilant about protecting its users' information that it is cracking down on which third parties can access data.

According to TechCrunch, a number of third-party applications were suddenly made incompatible with Instagram this week after the Facebook-owned company abruptly changed access to its API. This comes just a few days after Facebook revoked its Partner Categories feature, which allows brands and advertisers to target relevant users through Facebook and Instagram ([see story](#)).

At F8, Mr. Zuckerberg announced that Facebook is bringing in independent auditors to find apps that are misusing consumer data. When breaches are found, the social network will let consumers know.

Taking inspiration from the Internet browser feature in which users can clear their cookies and browsing data, Facebook is launching its own clear history option.



*Still from Facebook's live-streamed F8 conference. Image credit: Facebook*

As GDPR approaches in Europe, Facebook is also giving consumers around the globe more ability to control their data.

"Facebook is getting the message that privacy and transparency are important to Facebook users and Internet users in general," said Dan Goldstein, president and owner of Page 1 Solutions, in a comment about the presentation.

"Giving users the ability to identify and manage which sites are tracking information about them shows that Facebook is actively taking positive steps to protect user privacy.

"Time will tell, but this may help Facebook overcome the shadow of the Cambridge Analytica scandal."

Despite its troubles, Facebook was still far and away the most popular platform for digital advertising this past year, according to a report from Forrester Research.

The report found that Facebook and Alibaba together were jointly responsible for 48 percent of the year-over-year ad spend growth throughout the world. Facebook's overall share of global advertising also has grown significantly since 2015, making it an even more dominant presence for brands of all sizes ([see story](#)).

Along with privacy updates, Facebook is focusing on features that enable people to make connections with both other users and businesses.

On Instagram, the company is adding augmented reality camera effects, allowing users to add filters to their posts.

Facebook will debut watch parties, allowing users to watch and comment on videos with friends.

Messaging application WhatsApp launched an app for businesses earlier this year, seeing an opportunity for consumers to connect with businesses via text message.

Facebook also sees augmented reality and virtual reality as important tools for the future. At the conference, the company announced it was launching sales of Oculus Go VR headsets on May 1.

Priced at \$199, the devices are designed to open up immersive experiences to more individuals.