

MARKETING

Facebook leaves security position vacant amid data privacy scrutiny

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Facebook has faced ongoing scrutiny over its handling of users' data. Image credit: Facebook

By DANNY PARISI

Despite facing intense scrutiny over the past few months for its data and security practices, Facebook has decided to leave the position of chief security officer vacant after the title's current holder leaves.

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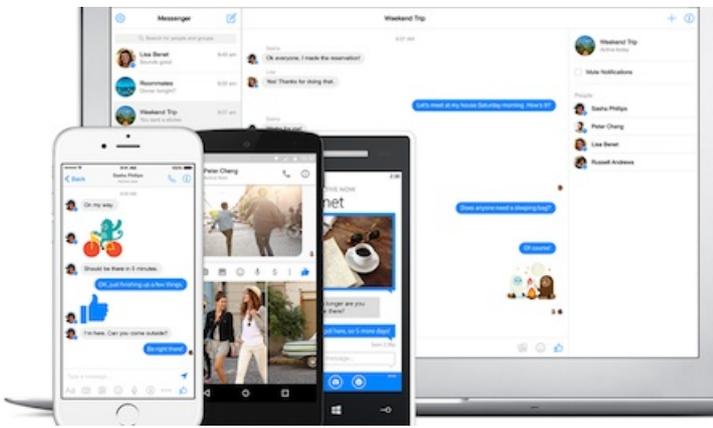
Alex Stamos, Facebook's current chief security officer, is leaving at the end of August to take a job as a professor at Stanford University. Facebook's decision not to hire a replacement is a bold move for a company that has already dealt with numerous security scandals in the past year alone.

Security concerns

Facebook's role in society today cannot be understated. The massive platform, along with Google, makes up a huge part of the digital media landscape today, and customers from all around the world give a huge amount of data to Facebook.

Understandably, when Facebook has security breaches it is a massive problem.

High-profile cases of mismanagement and data concerns have made Facebook the target of much scrutiny. This is what makes Facebook's decision regarding the chief security officer role so unexpected.



Facebook taps data on a variety of devices. Image credit: Facebook.

The platform has stated that when Mr. Stamos leaves at the end of the month, it will not replace him, leaving the role vacant.

Instead, Facebook will dissolve the security team altogether in favor of embedding security engineers in all of its other divisions.

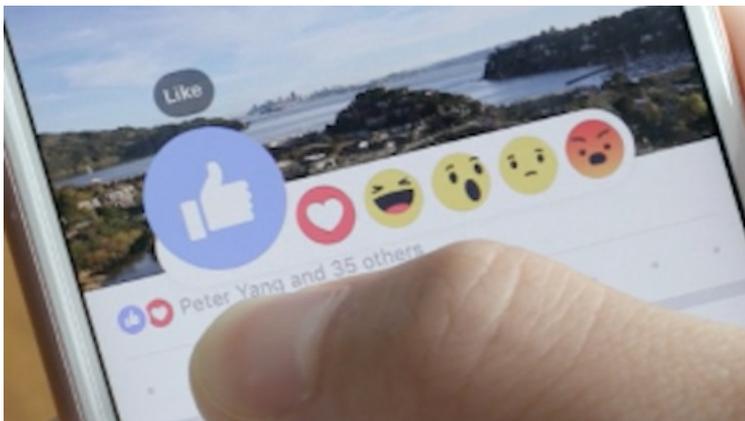
While it is possible that this approach may work better, it is undeniable that the dissolution of the security team in the midst of intense scrutiny over its data and privacy practices is not exactly confidence-inspiring.

However, Facebook insists that it should be judged on the effectiveness of its new security strategy and not "whether we have someone with a certain title," according to a statement the platform gave to The Verge ([see story](#)).

Ongoing scandals

Facebook's privacy scandals seem never to end as the company has yet again been revealed to have given users' data away without their consent.

Just a few months after the Cambridge Analytica scandal, a report from The New York Times has found that Facebook gave away years' worth of data on consumers to smartphone manufacturers including Apple and Samsung. While the partnership between Facebook and these companies has been public knowledge, the extent of the data given away, including that of customers who did not consent to this specific partnership, is only now being revealed ([see story](#)).



Facebook shared personal data with device makers for years. Image credit: Facebook

Repercussions surrounding Facebook's invasive use of data have extended far beyond those directly involved, causing luxury marketers to now be more concerned about their use of customer information.

According to a survey from Kelton Research and SheerID, two to one consumers want brands to request consent before using their personal data. Only 8 percent are comfortable with marketers looking into social channels for individualized information such as likes and activity for promotional purposes, including discounts ([see story](#)).

These trust issues are well founded and customers should not be blamed for being wary of Facebook's privacy options.

In the wake of that unease, Facebook's decision to dissolve its security team is a head-scratching move for a company trying to win back trust in its ability to handle sensitive data.

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