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How will Whatsapp's new privacy policy affect you?



WhatsApp's new policy regarding personal data and sharing thereof with Facebook has concerned many of its users. Businesses and individuals will all be affected by the new privacy policy that WhatsApp is implementing.

If users do not accept the new terms and conditions by May 2021, they will be forced to delete the app as they will no longer be able to use it.

In this blog we aim to highlight the significant points that may affect you in the near future.

Will the new policy affect the privacy of a user's personal messages?

WhatsApp confirmed that the new policy will not affect the privacy of the user's personal messages exchanged with family and friends, but the update will include changes to messaging a *business* on WhatsApp, which is optional and will provide further transparency as to how they collect and use data.

Some large businesses need to use hosting services to manage their communication. This will allow businesses to use Facebook to manage WhatsApp chats with their customers, answer questions, and send information such as purchase receipts. Facebook will include an option to message a business using WhatsApp. Facebook may use the way you interact with these ads to personalise the advertisements you see on Facebook.

What data will be collected by Facebook?

WhatsApp's new policy will allow for *Facebook to collect data from WhatsApp*, which includes the following *personal information*:

- Account information, although not directly but rather indirectly through an intermediary/subsidiary
- Phone numbers and contacts
- Addresses
- Status
- Location
- Transactions and payments
- Customer Support Communications for businesses
- Data usage
- What type of phone the user has, etc.

WhatsApp plans to collect more data from each user and will allow Facebook to access data to track how, where and what people buy. Although WhatsApp will not share the message content due to end-to-end encryption, or hear your phone calls, they will be able to access the metadata, in other words, with whom you talk and where and when you talk to people.

Conclusion

For additional privacy, you can choose to set your messages to disappear from chats after you send them. Users who do not accept the new terms and conditions or who are concerned for their privacy are advised to use safer apps called **Signal and Telegram**, which are highly trusted.

SERR Synergy assists businesses in compiling Data and Information Protection Reports. Our professional legal team ensures that physical information and cybersecurity risks of organisations are identified and managed to maintain the confidentiality, integrity and availability of data.

We provide various policies for organisations to implement in order to ensure compliance in such a way that it provides business value to our clients and allows for improvement in efficiencies and effectiveness by meeting the compliance requirements.

About the Author: Retha van Zyl completed her B.Com Hons (Economics and Risk Management) studies at the North West University. She joined our team in January 2016 and currently holds the title 'Information Compliance Advisor'. She specialises in POPI and PAIA compliance, which includes compiling and submitting PAIA Manuals to the Human Rights Commission. She also compiles the Data and Information Protection Report to identify risks associated with information security and drafts Information Security policies for procedural compliance in each department within an organisation.

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