



2021

WhatsApp's Privacy Policy: The Controversy

WhatsApp's Privacy Policy: Truths vs Myths.
 Read on to find out what set off the controversy surrounding WhatsApp and its change in privacy policy!

On **4 January** 2021, WhatsApp informed users that it was 'updating its terms of use and privacy policy'. Users had till 8th February to agree to new terms or face a deletion of the account. Nothing much had actually changed but there was a strong knee-jerk reaction from consumers as a result of misunderstanding, mistrust and hearsay from others.



Myths vs Facts

WhatsApp is not transparent with their privacy policy and are completely changing it to share all your information with Facebook.



On August 2016, WhatsApp announced changes to its privacy policy which, once accepted, would allow them to share some user data with its parent company — including for ad-targeting purposes on Facebook.

WhatsApp is the only messaging app that collects a lot of the user's data.



All messaging apps collect a lot of the user's data, with Wechat and Line collecting just as much.

WhatsApp has access to all of my messages.



WhatsApp's end-to-end encryption is used when you message another person. End-to-end encryption ensures that only you and the other person can read or listen to what is sent.

So what has changed?



Merchants using WhatsApp Business to chat with customers can now share that data with Facebook.



Facebook is bringing together the tools it has been building for companies to better leverage itself as an advertising platform.



WhatsApp offers businesses the option to use Facebook's new hosting services, allowing them to manage their WhatsApp business account messages for their own in-house or customer communications.

What does this mean?



Easier for small and medium-sized businesses to have their business pages or groups on Facebook redirect their clients to their WhatsApp business account, enabling them to keep their inventory updated while quickly responding to clients' messages.



This includes marketing, promoting their services and conducting online transactions where there will be processing of personal information.

Why the controversy?



Trust issues:
 This intercompany sharing of personal data opened up a can of worms where many have speculated about privacy issues arising from sharing such personal information - and no thanks to the mistrust of Facebook and their poor privacy record.



In truth, from a functional perspective, this sharing of personal information with other third parties is no different from what is being done on Google or any shopping portals such as Amazon, Lazada, or Shopee.

Are the privacy concerns valid?

Yes.

But it's not just Facebook and its group of companies. Every online business and mobile developer are doing it with the good intentions of enhancing online customer experience while monetising your personal data! Facebook just happens to be one of the biggest culprits.



Be wary of not just Facebook, but any company you are dealing with online

If it's free, you (your data) are the product.