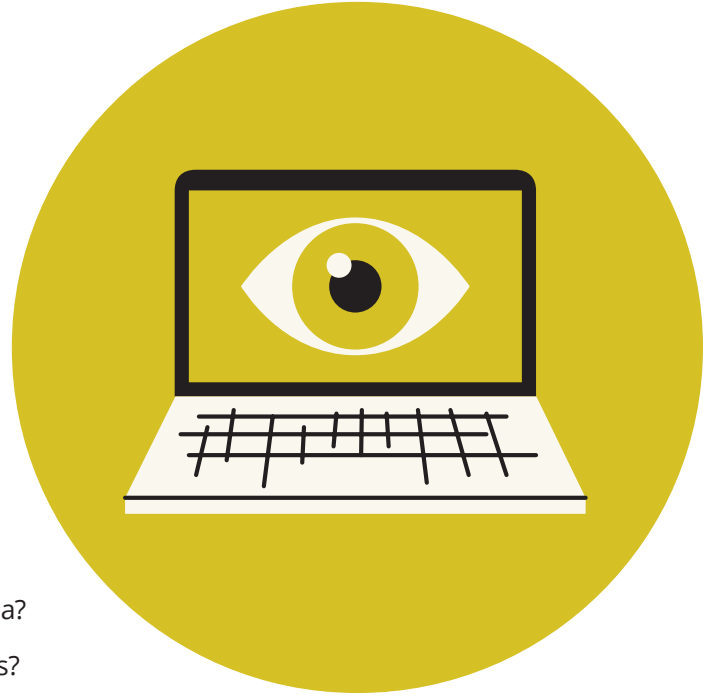


Online Privacy

In this lesson, you will read about a historic privacy breach that affected millions of social media users. You will discuss the privacy concerns of online users and debate the responsibilities of companies and the government in protecting personal data. You will also consider the future of online privacy.



Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What types of companies collect online user data?
2. What reason do companies have for collecting user data?
3. How is user data collected? Does this ever benefit users?

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.
Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| ___ 1. data | a) an administration's set of regulations and procedures |
| ___ 2. policy | b) an organized effort to promote a candidate or cause |
| ___ 3. breach | c) to tell, to make someone aware of something |
| ___ 4. campaign | d) information that can be stored and shared digitally |
| ___ 5. notify | e) information that becomes public and is damaging to one's reputation |
| ___ 6. scandal | f) preselected user settings that can be changed by the user |
| ___ 7. whistle-blower | g) a failure to observe a rule or law |
| ___ 8. backlash | h) to control through laws or rules |
| ___ 9. testify | i) a strong, negative reaction |
| ___ 10. regulate | j) to choose not to use or participate in |
| ___ 11. default | k) a person who makes scandalous information public |
| ___ 12. opt out | l) to give one's own account of what happened before a court |

Reading

ONLINE PRIVACY

Policing the Internet

1. In 2015, Cambridge Analytica, a voter analytics group, accessed the private **data** of 87 million Facebook users. They bought the information from a psychology professor from the University of Cambridge. Professor Aleksandr Kogan had used an app called "This Is Your Digital Life" to collect data from Facebook users' locations, likes, and sometimes even private messages. At the time, data collection by third party apps was not illegal under Facebook's **policies**. However, when the professor sold the information to Cambridge Analytica, this became a severe privacy **breach**. Cambridge Analytica worked for Donald Trump's presidential **campaign**.
2. Facebook learned of this privacy breach in 2015 but did not **notify** its affected users at the time. Instead, Facebook took down the app and told Cambridge Analytica to delete any user information it had. The company agreed to do this, but they used the information to help the Trump campaign instead.
3. In March 2018, the public became aware of Facebook's worst privacy **scandal** in history when a Canadian **whistle-blower**, who had previously worked for Cambridge Analytica, shared his story with *The Guardian*. When the story broke, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg, who usually tries to stay out of the limelight, had to face the **backlash** of millions of Facebook users. The CEO quickly admitted to his company's mistake and said it had updated its policies to prevent this from happening again.
4. Zuckerberg's apology was not enough for US lawmakers. In April 2018, the CEO was asked to **testify** before the US Senate on the subject of privacy. While in the hot seat, Zuckerberg admitted to mistakes but defended his company, saying that it started in his dorm room and was never expected to grow as quickly as it did.
5. During the Senate hearings, Zuckerberg said he would consider a new policy requiring Facebook to notify users within 72 hours of a privacy breach. He also agreed that a law requiring tech companies to get permission before reusing user's data would be a good idea. When asked if he thought his company should be **regulated**, Zuckerberg said yes, *if* Facebook was treated as a tech company rather than a media company.
6. Despite this scandal, Zuckerberg did not commit to changing users' **default** privacy settings. Many people want the default settings on social media sites such as Facebook set so that users have to **opt out** of strict privacy rather than opt in. However, the CEO did vow to work with the Senate on improving online privacy for the future. The company also offered a tool to allow users to see if their data had been compromised in the Cambridge Analytica scandal.

"If Facebook and other online companies will not or cannot fix the privacy invasions, then we are going to have to, we the Congress." —Senator Bill Nelson

Comprehension

Discuss these questions in pairs and write the answers in your notebook.

1. What is the main purpose of this article?
2. Discuss the subtitle. Should a site like Facebook employ "police"?
3. What was Aleksandr Kogan's role in this scandal?
4. Why does the reading mention Canada?
5. What is paragraph 5 mainly about?
6. What can be inferred from the last line of the reading?

Vocabulary Review

A. Complete the Sentences

Complete the sentences using a vocabulary word from page 1.

1. We ensure that your _____ will be kept private.
2. What a _____! I can't believe they sold our personal data like that.
3. The accused will _____ before the court on Sunday.
4. The _____ print settings are black and white.
5. You can _____ of employee benefits if your spouse already has medical coverage.

B. Odd One Out

Circle the word that does NOT belong in each grouping.

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| 1. a) policy
b) rule
c) default | 3. a) scandal
b) information
c) data | 5. a) notify
b) tell
c) default | 7. a) declare
b) testify
c) campaign |
| 2. a) breach
b) data
c) failure | 4. a) whistle-blower
b) president
c) informant | 6. a) opt in
b) participate
c) testify | 8. a) campaigned
b) regulated
c) controlled |

Discuss

Work with a partner or in small groups. Discuss the following questions.

1. Is online privacy important to you?
2. What role does the government have in protecting the privacy of online users?
3. Do you find it difficult to limit the personal data that companies collect from you when you are online?
4. What does "personal data" include? Which types of personal information do you think need the most protection?
5. What do you do to protect your own privacy when you are online?

Debate

Below are two topics to debate in small groups, pairs, or as a class. Your teacher will tell you if you will be debating for or against the idea. You will have ten minutes to prepare your arguments.

Topic #1

Every government must create laws that regulate companies like Facebook in order to protect user privacy.

Topic #2

Companies such as Facebook should be required by law to set default privacy settings as high as possible.

Write

Choose one of the questions below.

Write a paragraph in your notebook stating your own opinion.

1. I don't understand what the big deal about online privacy is. I don't have much to hide, and I have more important things to worry about.
2. This Facebook scandal terrifies me. I might not use social media anymore because I don't want my private information to be used against me.
3. Governments need to be more involved in regulating companies like Facebook.

Critical Thinking

GROUP WORK

Work in a group to discuss and consider the future of online privacy. Consider the following questions.

1. How does online privacy differ in your home country compared to other countries?
2. Do you think governments will soon do much more to regulate tech and media giants in countries such as the US? Will regulation lead to censorship?
3. Will online privacy be more important in 10 years than it is today, or will people become more open and used to sharing more? What will online privacy look like in 20 years?

Present your group's thoughts, opinions, and predictions to the class.

A Movie

THE CIRCLE

1. Watch the trailer of the movie *The Circle* (find it on ESL Library's YouTube channel in the Online Privacy playlist). What do you think the movie will be about?
2. Are you interested in watching this movie? Why or why not? This movie is based on a book. Would you prefer to read Dave Eggers' book?
3. Based on what you saw in the trailer, which company that exists today is most like the Circle? Do you think this is the future of online privacy, or are we moving in the opposite direction?

Useful Expressions & Transitions for Debating

Agreeing and Disagreeing

- That doesn't take away from the fact that...
- That's beside the point.
- With all due respect...
- I agree with you there.
- I agree with ---- (name).
- I see your point, but...
- That may be true, but...
- We're going to have to agree to disagree.
- I get/see where you're coming from, but...
- I'm afraid I disagree entirely.
- I'm afraid I'd have to disagree.
- I agree to some extent, but...
- I disagree with you there.
- Pardon me for disagreeing, but...

Interrupting / Asking to Contribute

- I hate to interrupt, but...
- If I may come in here...
- I'd like to add something.
- Would you like to contribute something?
- I'd like to raise a point.
- If I could speak for a moment...
- I'd like to cut in here.
- You haven't answered my question.

Persuading

- Can you see where I'm coming from?
- I challenge you to give this a try/chance.
- I want you to see it my way.
- Put yourself in my shoes.
- Am I getting through to you?

Expressing an Opinion

- In my honest opinion...
- It is my belief that...
- From my experience...
- From where I look at it...
- From my point of view...

Clarifying / Rephrasing

- Let's be clear here...
- I think you misunderstood what I said.
- What I said was... (repeat a point that was misunderstood or confused)
- What I meant to say was... (rephrase something in a way that is clearer)
- In other words...
- What I was trying to say before I was interrupted is that...

Summarizing / Concluding

- So let me get this straight. You think...
- To conclude...
- I'd just like to summarize by saying...
- Finally, I'd like to reiterate that...
- It's time to take stock of what we've heard today.
- Both sides have some valid points.
- The stronger argument/team today is...