

WHY IS THIS A PROBLEM FOR CONSUMERS?

“ Move fast and break things. Unless you are breaking stuff, you are not moving fast enough.” – [Mark Zuckerberg](#)

A threat to disconnect in the middle of a global pandemic. Two billion users are forced to either accept the new terms imposed by Facebook or abandon a network of family, friends, clients, and contacts built over the years and with whom they often communicate daily over the app. During a global pandemic, where borders have become more real than ever, for many losing WhatsApp could mean no access to remote medical advice, no calls to a sick relative, no video call with loved one.

In some countries, the decision is extremely taxing for minorities, immigrants and poor communities. In the United States, diaspora communities are especially likely to use WhatsApp to communicate with friends and family abroad. [Nearly half of Hispanic Americans use WhatsApp compared to just 16 percent of white Americans.](#) Economic constraints and poor broadband infrastructure limit everyday online communication to the use of smartphones in much of the Global South. WhatsApp is among the viable means of communication, particularly in rural areas.

Facebook moved fast and broke promises: Consumers deserve trust and respect rather than sneaky new policies. Facebook, owned and controlled by Mark Zuckerberg, has failed us over and over again. Making sneaky changes to terms of service and privacy policies has long been Facebook's pattern. Doing so once again at the height of a global pandemic, when people are relying more than ever on online messaging and communications, reflects a corporate greed willing to go to any length to extract our data and disregard our privacy rights.

2014: WhatsApp reaches 400 million users. Facebook buys WhatsApp.

- “We're not looking to drive revenue from WhatsApp in the near term. Instead, we're focusing on growth. I don't anticipate trying to aggressively grow WhatsApp's revenue until the service reaches billions of users.” – [Mark Zuckerberg](#)

Facebook has breached user privacy, by sharing data with advertisers and granting third-party access to user information, as well as abused its monopoly market position. In acquiring WhatsApp in 2014, Facebook further consolidated the market in global communications – while promising not to change WhatsApp’s privacy policy. Mark Zuckerberg demonstrated, once again, why he can’t be trusted when he then updated WhatsApp’s privacy policy to begin sharing user data with Facebook.

2016: WhatsApp reaches 1 billion users. Facebook WhatsApp data sharing kicks off.

- “By coordinating more with Facebook, we’ll be able to do things like track basic metrics about how often people use our services and better fight spam on WhatsApp”
- “For example, you might see an ad from a company you already work with, rather than one from someone you’ve never heard of.” - [WhatsApp Blog](#)

2018: WhatsApp reaches 1,5 billion users. Facebook introduces WhatsApp Business.

- “Over the next five years we’re focused on building out the business ecosystems around our apps like Instagram, WhatsApp and Messenger.” – [Mark Zuckerberg](#)
- “I sold my users’ privacy to a larger benefit. I made a choice and a compromise and I live with that every day.” – [WhatsApp co-founder Brian Acton](#)

2021: WhatsApp reaches 2 billion users. WhatsApp’s privacy policy introduces a business messaging function scheduled to take effect from 15 May.

- “We are building new features to make it easier to make a business transaction within the application. We are building tools to allow businesses to store and manage their WhatsApp chats using Facebook’s secure hosting infrastructure if they wish and we are in the process of updating WhatsApp’s privacy policy on services to reflect this optional experience.” – [Mark Zuckerberg](#)

Now, Zuckerberg intends for WhatsApp to contribute directly to Facebook revenues -- at the expense of user privacy. Facebook hopes to see user’s “opt-in” to business messaging and interact with businesses on WhatsApp. A major driver behind these interactions would be the data (and metadata) that Facebook has collected on users through both Facebook and WhatsApp accounts for the past years, unbeknownst to many users.

The upcoming May 15 policy change shows once again why Facebook cannot be trusted with our data.