



Facebook is turning facial recognition back on - so here's how to check your "photo tagging" settings

Naked Security post from Sophos Asia Pacific Head of Technology Paul Ducklin

Facebook's controversial flirtation with facial recognition is back in the spotlight.

At the end of 2010, the tell-us-all-about-yourself social networking service announced that it would be using facial recognition to make it easier for you to tag other people in your photos.

Just in case you didn't know the names of all of the "friends" in photos you'd uploaded, Facebook's plan was to help you out.

Although it didn't try to do anything you couldn't have done yourself, and merely suggested a name and awaited your approval, there was no provision for the person whom Facebook thought it had recognised to get involved in the approval process.

Facebook would tell you that you had been tagged, in case you wanted to opt out. But it wouldn't let you choose in the first place, even though it was claiming to know who you were.

That caused not a few people (including me) to reach for the word "creepy". It certainly made it much more likely that you'd end up identified online without your consent, since people you didn't know well were now more likely to know or to find out who you were.

This whole facial recognition saga has been through a series of on-again, off-again machinations since then.

Last year, Facebook temporarily suspended the feature "to make some technical improvements," in its own words. But now it's back:

As we announced last year, we temporarily suspended our photo tag suggestion feature to make some technical improvements. Today, we're re-enabling the feature in the United States so that people can use facial recognition to help them easily identify a friend in a photo and share that content with them. This is the same feature that millions of people previously used to help them quickly share billions of photos with friends and family. Like before, it's reappearing first in the US.

And bad luck if you're one of the 90% of Naked Security readers who said they'd prefer Facebook to be entirely opt-in last time we asked:

You're not going to be asked if you want this feature turned back on, notwithstanding that it's different. The decision will be made for you.

With this in mind, it's probably worth revisiting your Facebook privacy settings relevant to tagging. You can dig the answer out of Facebook's own help pagewith a little bit of work:

Be sure to read on, though, to make sure you realise how much value Facebook puts on you leaving this feature enabled:

Before you opt out of using this feature, we encourage you to consider how tag suggestions benefit you and your friends. Our tagging tools (including grouping photos that look similar and suggesting friends who might be in them) are meant to make it easier for you to share your memories and experiences with your friends.

Convinced? Have you made your mind up now?

OK, here's a visual summary of how to manage photo tagging on your Facebook account.

You start by clicking on the gear icon at the far right, and choosing Privacy Settings from the menu:

Then go to the menu at the far left, and choose Timeline and Tagging:

And now review your settings, including the all-important Who sees tag suggestions when photos that look like you are uploaded:

And that's how to do it. Take care out there!

If you are on Facebook and want to keep yourself informed about the latest news from the world of internet security and privacy, join the Sophos Facebook page where more than 200,000 people regularly discuss these issues and best practice.

Full post available

at: http://nakedsecurity.sophos.com/2013/02/02/facebook-turns-facial-recognition-back-on/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_content=Google+Reader&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+nakedsecurity+%28Naked+Security+-+Sophos%29