

Privacy Concerns over Facebook's 3rd Party Applications

Mike Burry

CS 305, Spring 2010

Outline

Facebook introduction

Third Party Application introduction

Third Party Application Data Access

The Friend Problem

Conclusion

facebook

Created by 4 Harvard Univ. CS students/roommates

Mark Zuckerberg, Eduardo Saverin, Dustin Moskowitz, Chris Hughes

Originally only for Harvard students... then other Ivy League schools. Public: Sept. 2006

Most used social networking site worldwide (400+ million monthly active users, 50% daily!)

First to offer Apps (May, 2007)

on earth did we stalk our exes remember our co-workers' birthdays bug our friends and play a rous

Third Party Apps

Facebook launches Facebook Platform, a developer framework (May 2007)

Over 550,000 Apps. (as of May, 2010)

Over 1 million registered developers (as of May, 2010)

Hosted on developers website

Relies on users to report suspected abuse

Given an alarming amount of personal information without a control mechanism

Third Party Data Access (“basic information”)

Profile ID

Current City

Name

Profile Photo URL

Email

Pages

Gender

Friends ID's

Birthdate

<http://developers.facebook.com/policy/#definitions>

Privacy Policy? Maybe not.

Nearly 1/3 of all Facebook applications contain no privacy policy link

Many aren't viewable until AFTER install

of the top 12 don't:

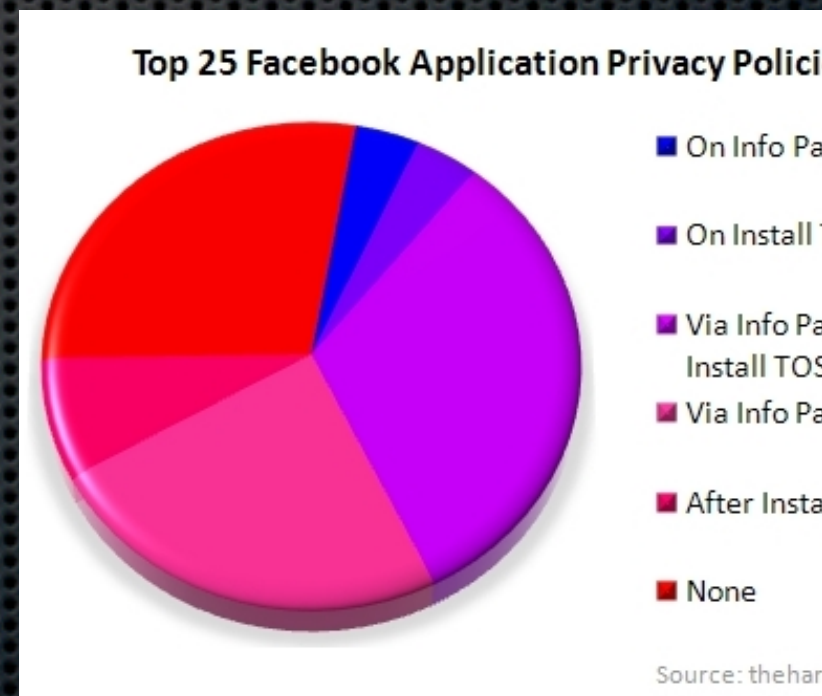
“How Well Do You Know Me” (#3)

“MyCalendar” (#5)

“Farm Town” (#12)

“Facebook Verified” not immune

“RockYou Live” (formerly Super Wall) has no privacy policy at all



the Friend Problem

0% of Facebook users use 3rd party apps.

(<http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>)

“Basic information” about friends is provided to the app, along with:

status updates

online presence

website

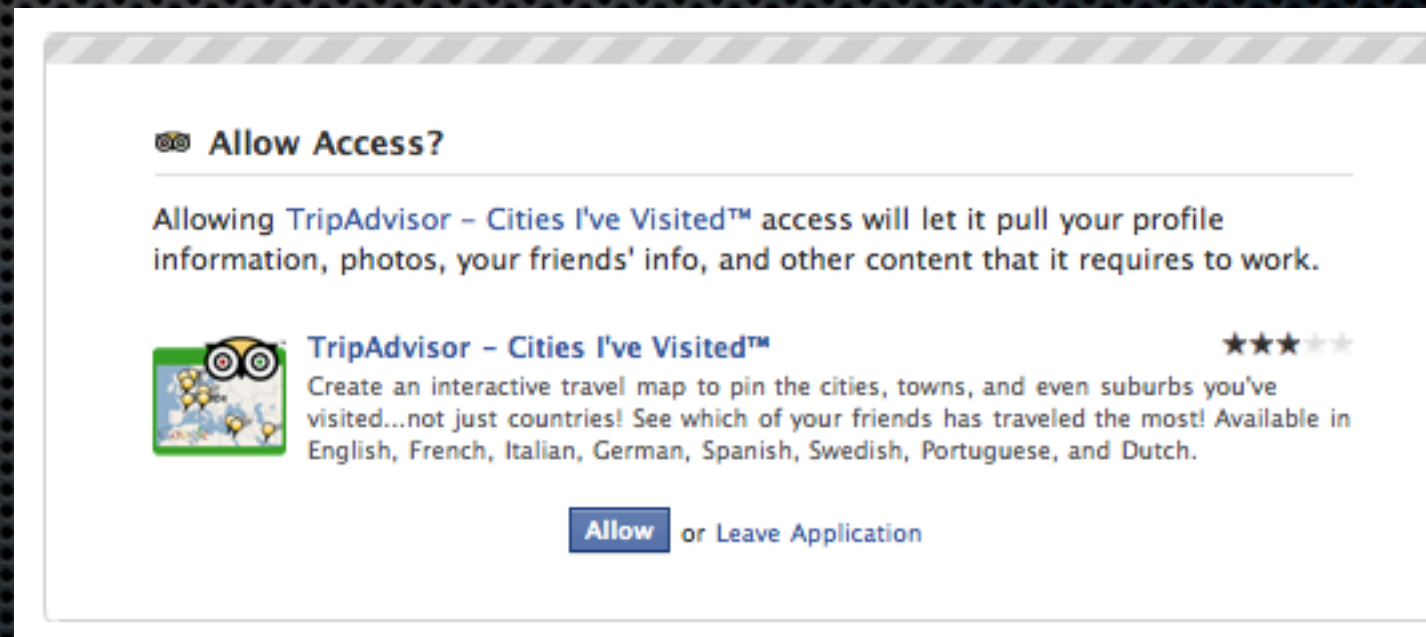
videos

links

notes


photos

“about me”



Allow Access?


Allowing **TripAdvisor - Cities I've Visited™** access will let it pull your profile information, photos, your friends' info, and other content that it requires to work.

 **TripAdvisor - Cities I've Visited™** ★★★★

Create an interactive travel map to pin the cities, towns, and even suburbs you've visited...not just countries! See which of your friends has traveled the most! Available in English, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Swedish, Portuguese, and Dutch.

or

Privacy Settings ▶ Applications and Websites

 Applications and Websites**What your friends can share about you through applications and websites**

When your friend visits a Facebook Platform application or website, they may want to share certain information to make the experience more social. For example, a greeting card application may use your birthday information to prompt your friend to send a card.

If your friend uses an application or website that you do not use, you can control certain types of information the application can access. Please note that applications will be able to access your Name, Profile Picture, Gender, as well as any information that is visible to Everyone. They will also be able to access your [Connections](#), except the Connections noted with an asterisk below. In those cases, although the information is considered a Connection, you can control whether an application can access it.

- Status updates
- Online presence
- Website
- Family and relationship status *
- Relationship details (significant other, looking for, etc.)
- My videos
- My links
- My notes
- My photos
- Photos and videos I'm tagged in *
- About me
- My birthday
- My religious and political views

[Save Changes](#)

Conclusion

(reluctantly) use Facebook

Far too much information is shared with applications
out of Facebook's control

Improved (debatable) privacy settings, but still not
adequate

- Too complicated -- too many pages, wording is ambiguous

- Defaults are ridiculously generous

- Requires explicit opt-out

Facebook should be held liable for how data is used
that they provide to 3rd parties or further limit info

Conclusion (Cont.)

Facebook should explicitly state what information is being provided when a user requests an application

Application TOS/Privacy policy should be provided BEFORE allowing access

Recommended privacy settings:

- Opt-out of everything -- opt-in as necessary

- Set visibility to "Friends Only"

- Set "What your friends can share about you" to nothing

Personal recommendation:

- Activity on Applications & Games -- keep it to yourself. No one else cares

References

Facebook. Developer Principles and Policies, <http://developers.facebook.com/policy/>

Perez, Sarah. Does that Facebook App Have a Privacy Policy? Probably Not. July 29, 2009.
http://www.readwriteweb.com/archives/does_that_facebook_app_have_a_privacy_policy_probably_not.p

Neil, Nick. 10 Privacy Settings Every Every Facebook User Should Know. February 2, 2009.
<http://www.allfacebook.com/2009/02/facebook-privacy/>

Wart, Kim. A Flashy Facebook Page, at a Cost to Privacy. June 12, 2008.
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/06/11/AR2008061103759.html>

Re, Timothy. Are Facebook Applications A Privacy Disaster In The Making? January 25, 2008.
<http://www.techdirt.com/articles/20080123/15023050.shtml>

Alt, Adrienne & Evans, David. Privacy Protection for Social Networking APIs.
<http://www.cs.virginia.edu/felt/privacy/>

Sophos's recommendations for Facebook settings. <http://www.sophos.com/security/best-practice/facebook>

Wikipedia. Facebook. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook/>