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Advocates Urge FTC to Halt Meta's Plan to Use AI Chatbot Data for Ads

Meta's chatbot data grab risks normalizing surveillance-driven marketing across the industry, setting a dangerous precedent for privacy and consumer protection.

Washington, D.C. A coalition of 36 privacy, consumer protection, children's rights, and civil rights advocates and researchers today called on the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to investigate and halt Meta's recently announced plan to use conversations with its AI chatbots for advertising and content personalization. The [letter](#), sent to FTC Chair Andrew Ferguson and Commissioners, urges the agency to exercise its oversight authority and act under both Meta's existing consent decree and Section 5 of the FTC Act to stop this practice from moving forward.

On October 1, 2025, Meta announced that beginning December 16 it would use chatbot interactions on Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp to inform ad targeting and personalization. These conversations often contain highly sensitive disclosures - including health, relationship, and mental health information - yet Meta has provided no opt-in consent mechanism and no assurances of heightened privacy or security safeguards.

In the letter, the coalition calls on the FTC to:

- Enforce Meta's existing consent decrees and require disclosure of risk assessments;
- Treat the practice as an unfair and deceptive act under Section 5 of the FTC Act;
- Suspend Meta's chatbot advertising program pending Commission review;
- Finalize the long-pending modifications to the 2020 order to strengthen privacy protections, including a proposed prohibition to monetize minors' data.

The groups are also urging the Commission to disclose its findings publicly.

The coalition emphasizes that Meta's initiative is not a marginal product feature but part of a deliberate strategy to expand surveillance-driven marketing. Without FTC intervention, they warn, Meta's actions will normalize invasive AI data practices across the industry, further undermining consumer privacy and protection.

Quotes

“The FTC cannot stand by while Meta and its peers rewrite the rules of privacy and consumer protection in the AI era. Chatbot surveillance for ad targeting is not a distant threat—it is happening now. Meta’s move will accelerate a race in which other companies are already implementing similarly invasive and manipulative practices, embedding commercial surveillance deeper into every aspect of our lives.”

Katharina Kopp, Deputy Director, Center for Digital Democracy (CDD)

“The FTC has a sordid history of letting Meta off the hook, and this is where it’s gotten us: industrial-scale privacy abuses brought to you by a chatbot that pretends to be your friend,” said John Davisson, Director of Litigation for EPIC. “And where is the Trump-Ferguson FTC? Slow-walking a critical enforcement action brought under Chair Khan to protect minors from Meta’s exploitative data practices. Meta’s appalling chatbot scheme should be a wake-up call to the Commission. It’s time to get serious about reining in Meta.”

Signatories

The 36 organizations that signed to the letter include, among others: Center for Digital Democracy; Electronic Privacy Information Center; Public Citizen; Demand Progress Education Fund; ParentsTogether Action; Becca Schmill Foundation; Center for Economic Integrity; Fairplay; National Association of Consumer Advocates; Consumer Federation of America; 5Rights Foundation; Mothers Against Media Addiction (MAMA); and Common Sense Media.

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The **Center for Digital Democracy** is a Washington, D.C.-based public interest research and advocacy organization, working on behalf of citizens, consumers, communities, and youth to protect and expand privacy, digital rights, and data justice.

The **Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC)** is a 501(c)(3) non-profit established in 1994 to protect privacy, freedom of expression, and democratic values in the information age through advocacy, research, and litigation. For more than 30 years, EPIC has fought for robust safeguards to protect personal information.