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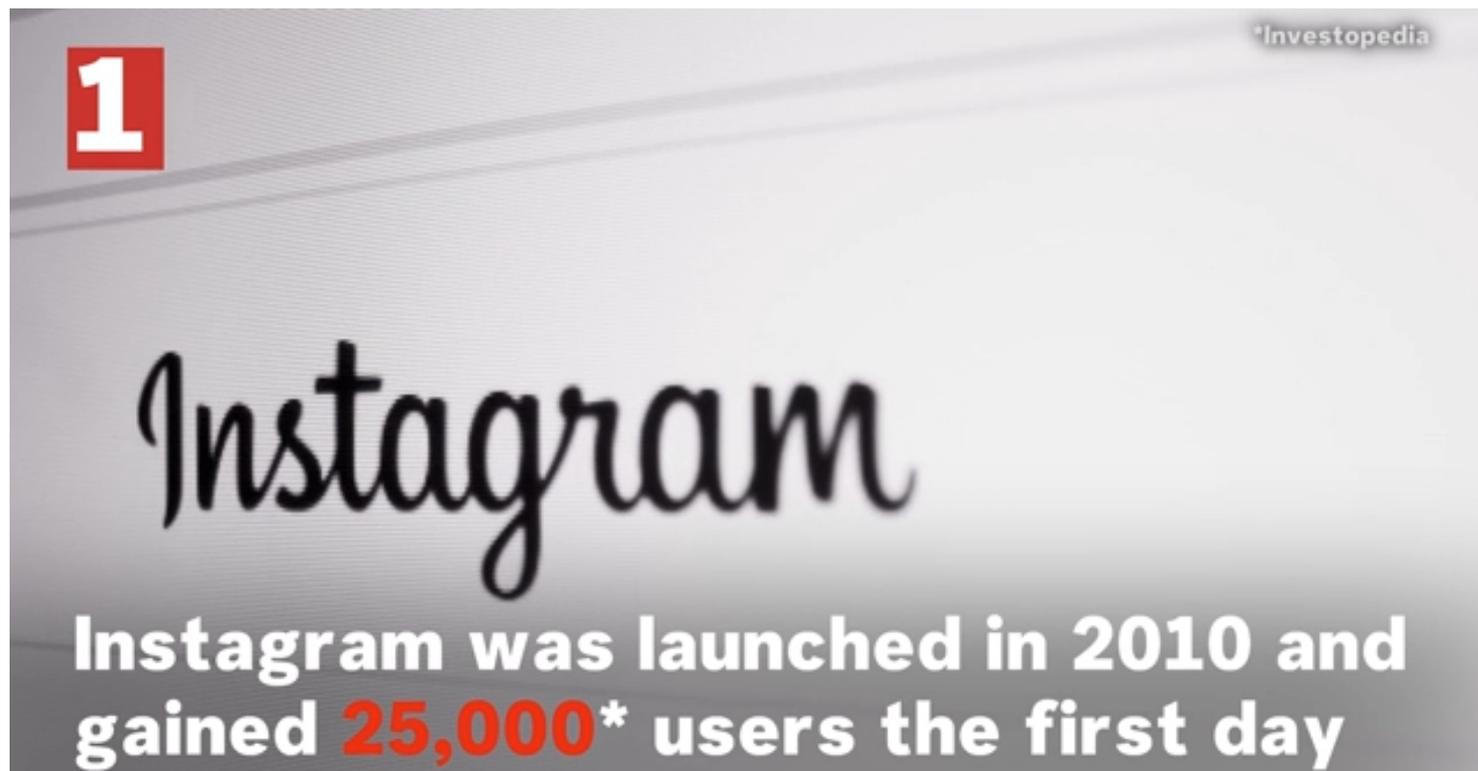
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Facebook Sued For Billions Over Harvesting People's Data

BY **JACK DUTTON** ON 1/14/22 AT 5:52 AM EST



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Facebook is facing a class action lawsuit which could see its parent company Meta paying \$3.1 billion to its UK users for harvesting their data.

The lawsuit was filed against [Meta](#) on Thursday with the U.K.'s Competition Appeal Tribunal in London, TechCrunch reported.

The lawsuit claims [Facebook](#), which was recently renamed Meta, should pay its 44 million British users' compensation for taking all their personal and private data between 2015 and 2019. Facebook has yet to respond to the lawsuit.

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The claim is that due to Facebook's dominance in the social media sector, the

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In return, the lawsuit states, users were only able to use the social media platform to do things like post pictures to their family and friends.

Liza Lovdahl-Gormsen, an international competition law expert, brought the lawsuit. Lovdahl-Gormsen has previously made submissions before British parliament about Facebook's market dominance.

Her case argues that Facebook sent an "unfair price" for British users of the social media site, as they were asked to surrender their invaluable personal data, who in return got free access to the platform.

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The British public did not receive any financial compensation for giving away their data to Facebook, despite the tech giant raking in billions of dollars of profit.

Lovdahl-Gormsen claims Facebook locked UK users and their data on their platform and also tracked them via Facebook pixel, on other websites, to provide in-depth "social graph" data about its users.

Facebook pixel is a piece of code that other websites can use to help them track conversions from Facebook ads.

Newsweek has contacted Facebook about the lawsuit.

Lovdahl-Gormsen's lawyers have written to Meta to inform them of the action, TechCrunch reported.

Lovdahl-Gormsen will represent around 44 million people domiciled in the U.K who used Facebook at least once between 1 October 2015 and 31 December 2019.

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It is an "opt-out" class action, which means that UK Facebook users will not have to actively join the case to seek damages, but will be part of the claim unless they decide to opt out from it. It is the first case of its kind against Meta in England and Wales.

Innsworth, one of the largest litigation funders in the world, is funding the class action. Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan will be acting as legal counsel. Quinn Emanuel and Innsworth have a history working on large consumer class actions.

Lovdahl-Gormsen told *Newsweek*: "Facebook operates with a business model of targeted advertising, and that's where it's earning all that money. And of course, what's needed for that business model to work is data, and users of Facebook are upgrading data input into that business model without being compensated for that."

She added that she didn't think Facebook users have transparency around how their data was used.

"They may understand that the data they provide on Facebook is being used, but are they aware that they're also that Facebook is also collecting data on them when they use third party websites?"

"I think it's time for Facebook to compensate users for the data they have relied

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Asked how much users will be compensated as a result of the class action, the legal expert said: "So right now what I can say is the damages will be a minimum of £2.3 billion plus interest. The aggregate figure for the class action will be made public when the cases filed before the competition Appeal Tribunal."

Although there are many different social media platforms out there, Lovdahl-Gormsen said Facebook dominates the market and the way people connect with family and friends on there is different to other social media networks.

"They have economies of scale, and they have a massive access to data. And that's why I think that this platform is just vastly different from all the other platforms out there."

"If humans had a choice to go and connect with family and friends in other platforms, maybe they would do that, but they don't have a choice," she added.

This latest development adds to Meta's woes over the Atlantic and elsewhere, and comes just a few years after the data collection scandal surrounding Cambridge Analytica.

In the U.S., there is a consumer class action against Meta and an antitrust action by the FTC that could see Facebook having to sell off its popular Instagram and WhatsApp platforms.

A Washington, D.C. judge on Tuesday declined Facebook's second attempt to dismiss the lawsuit.

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