

# Meta and privacy issues

## ■ The need to use personal data

**Meta Platforms, Inc.**, the company owning social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, is constantly kept under surveillance for the way it handles data mainly because, in managing the most popular social media apps in the world, it has collected millions of user data which are constantly employed to maintain its business, mainly based on advertising. As for the privacy of data, Meta must conform to different privacy regulations, such as EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA), which are updated from time to time.

## ■ Meta's attempts to protect the users' privacy

In order to **comply** with these regulations, especially after numerous privacy scandals involving famous people, Meta has invested billions in building a global privacy programme. Part of this programme is the so-called "Privacy by Design", which aims to **embed** privacy into new products; this would involve teams of engineers, legal experts, and designers in the project and production phases.

## ■ The difficulties in respecting the privacy laws

However, despite these measures, Meta's strategy frequently **clashes** with the strict requirements of regulations. A major difficulty for the company is the legal restriction on processing user data for personalised advertising in the EU. To solve this problem, Meta has decided to give users a choice: free services with ads, that involves processing personal data, or a paid subscription free from ads.



This "pay or OK" model aims to make sure that the user must give explicit consent for targeted advertising, but it remains controversial. In particular, it is not clear if this choice meets the GDPR standard for freely given consent, as the company dominates the global market and might decide to make consent conditional to access the basic services.

## ■ The challenge of new AI models

Furthermore, the use of public posts and interactions to train Meta's AI models has raised new concerns regarding transparency, consent, and the right to object to data use. The need for Meta to maintain its business model, which requires handling the users' data to survive, and the increasing global demand for data protection continues to challenge the future of its platforms.

**clash:** *scontro*  
**to comply:** *conformarsi*  
**to embed:** *incorporare*

**1**  Match the following words from the text with the correct definition.

- |               |                          |   |
|---------------|--------------------------|---|
| 1. App        | <input type="checkbox"/> | a. To manipulate something or to manage a situation.                          |
| 2. Regulation | <input type="checkbox"/> | b. A person or business that pays to advertise a product or service.          |
| 3. Advertiser | <input type="checkbox"/> | c. A system of social media enabling people to communicate or share contents. |
| 4. Consent    | <input type="checkbox"/> | d. Permission for something or agreement to do something.                     |
| 5. To handle  | <input type="checkbox"/> | e. Software designed to do a particular job.                                  |
| 6. Platform   | <input type="checkbox"/> | f. An authoritative rule.   |

**2**  Decide if the sentences are true or false. Correct the false ones.

- |  | T                        | F                        |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Meta is the company which owns TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook.                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Meta is always kept under control for privacy issues.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. The company's life is largely dependent on advertising.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. The laws on privacy are the same all over the world.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. These laws change from time to time.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Meta is not really interested in protecting users' privacy.                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. If a user does not want to see ads when using Meta products, they have to pay a subscription fee. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. The "pay or OK" model complies with the GDPR rules concerning freely given consent.               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**3**  Write a short description of each of the following apps or platforms.

➤ *TikTok – With this app users can create short, funny videos and share them on the app itself or on social networking websites.*

- |             |              |             |            |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------|
| 1. Facebook | 2. Instagram | 3. Whatsapp | 4. Youtube |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------|