Instagram Vows: We Won't Use Your Photos in Ads

Instagram [1] co-founder Kevin Systrom vowed Tuesday to remove language from the service's privacy policy that seemed to say [2] Instagram was going to allow user pictures to be employed in advertising.

"The language we proposed ... raised questions about whether your photos can be part of an advertisement," Systrom wrote in a blog post entitled "Thank you and we're listening [3]."

"We do not have plans for anything like this, and because of that we're going to remove the language that raised the question."

The overall tone of the blog post is one of clarification, rather than retraction. Systrom does apologize that the language wasn't clear enough. "Legal documents are easy to misinterpret," Systrom writes at the outset. "Our intention in updating the terms was to communicate that we'd like to experiment with innovative advertising that feels appropriate on Instagram.

"Instead it was interpreted by many that we were going to sell your photos to others without any compensation. This is not true and it is our mistake that this language is confusing.

"To be clear: it is not our intention to sell your photos. We are working on updated language in the terms to make sure this is clear."

Presumably, this is the language in the original agreement that Systrom felt was confusing: "you agree that a business or other entity may pay us to display your username, likeness, photos (along with any associated metadata), and/or actions

you take, in connection with paid or sponsored content or promotions, without any compensation to you."

That seems like an unusually clear legal statement, so it's surprising that Systrom appears to be surprised by the reaction -- and that he describes such language as "confusing." It's also very similar to language contained in the legal agreements provided to users by Instagram's new parent company, Facebook [4].

And if that was never Instagram's intent, why have the language in there at all? Could Systrom be backtracking without wanting to appear to backtrack?

On the other hand, the blog post is a relatively detailed and rapid response, coming as it does a little more than 24 hours after the privacy policy started kicking up a ruckus on social networks [5].

Of course, as many users have pointed out, Systrom's words are all well and good, but we'll have to reserve final judgment for the revised terms of service and privacy policy.

Will this be enough to stem the tide of anti-Instagram outrage? Have you changed your mind about leaving the service?

Read More [6]

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