

Facebook Disables Accounts Tied to NYU Research Project | Bloomberg

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Facebook Inc. has disabled the personal accounts of a group of New York University researchers studying political ads on the social network, claiming they are scraping data in violation of the company's terms of service.

The company also cut off the researchers' access to Facebook's APIs, technology that is used to share data from Facebook to other apps or services, and disabled other apps and Pages associated with the research project, according to Mike Clark, a director of product management on Facebook's privacy team.

The researchers are part of a project called the NYU Ad Observatory, which asks people to download a browser extension that collects data on what political ads the users see on Facebook, and how those ads were targeted.

Political ads on Facebook have been a source of contention for years. The company has a controversial policy against fact-checking political ads, which led to criticism that candidates would pay the company to spread lies through their ads. Facebook eventually halted all new political ads in the week leading up to the 2020 U.S. election in an effort to fight misinformation.

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