

· EDITORIAL ·

Don't look to Facebook for transparency

Does it offer some comfort to know that Mark Zuckerberg is one of the 80 million or so Facebook users whose data was harvested and used to influence the outcome of the U.S. presidential election?

Zuckerberg, who is not only Facebook's CEO, but also the chair of its board and its majority voting shareholder, offered up that revelation in testimony Wednesday before American lawmakers.

He was called to testify in response to the ongoing and growing controversy about the social media giant in the wake of unethical use of user data and a host of other problems.

Zuckerberg didn't hesitate to acknowledge his company's failures, but troubling questions remain. The company has faced years of questioning on many of these issues.

Why didn't it act sooner to mitigate the damage done by fake news?

Why have terror groups and extremists of all sorts been able to thrive in the Facebook environment?

Why didn't it know, especially since it was warned, that some of the apps it welcomed into the Facebook world could be harvesting data for use by third parties? (That's how Cambridge Analytica received data it later used to help the Trump campaign.)

Why did take the Cambridge Analytica debacle for Facebook to acknowledge user privacy settings weren't adequately intuitive and easy to use and understand?

Why was it taken by surprise by news that during the 2016 election campaign Russian propaganda accounts attacking Hillary Clinton and promoting Donald Trump were shared hundreds of millions of times?

Zuckerberg has said part of the problem was his personal misunderstanding of just how many people would try to use his company for nefarious purposes. To put it mildly, that strains credulity.

This man and his company - whose motto is "Move fast and break things" - have enjoyed astounding success through corporate aggression, playing hardball and taking on all competitive threats like they were high combat. Zuckerberg's portrayal of himself as wide-eyed and naive sounds and feels bogus.

This much is clear: Governments, including in Canada, need to start taking consumer and citizen protection in the digital world more seriously.

Europe has set the new standard with its General Data Protection Regulation. Canada should begin to move down this road without delay.

Consumer protection, accountability and transparency mustn't be left to companies like Facebook. It's not at all clear they can be trusted going forward.



At least support an opinion with facts

Re: Letter Make an Informed Election choice.

Can an opinion piece get more unreasonable than this?

An attack on Wynne with no supporting reasons and an accusation of childishness against anyone who supports her policies?

Why do you publish such tripe?

You don't do your readers any favours by publishing politically polarized, one-sided letters that pander to a narrow and committed audience. That's not debate.

If someone wants to criticize Wynne, please include reasons.

Those not in a closed echo chamber of cherry-

picked information don't see anti-Wynne conclusions as a given.

I encourage the writer to step back and look at the progress Wynne has made on medicare, minimum wage legislation or her defence against "Buy American" policies. Why not criticize her for an expansion of the deficit or selling off parts of Hydro? Even one reason would make this letter reasonable!

Of course, there are no reasons to criticize Ford because he has no policy, though I suspect he would be good at marijuana marketing.

On that note, I wonder if he paid taxes on his hashish profits, profits he made while the rest of us were working hard and living ethically and legally within our means.

Rick Hall

Politicians' salaries a 'no-win' situation: Mayor

RE: Council pay increase consultant report.

If we had staff look at this issue they would be accused of serving their masters (council).

In the past years, citizens were appointed to a remuneration committee and they got accused of being buddies with the council.

It is a no-win situation. To be objective we had an external company review and make recommendations comparing wages to other communities.

Council approved a review at the end of each term and that the town council would be the 50th percentile to our comparators.

We did not pay ourselves an increase but looked at the pay increase for the position. The pay increase does not come into effect until the new term of council. We do not know who is seeking re-election at this time.

You should have read the Independent Free Press story where the consultant recommended \$114,000 for the mayor's position.

I put a motion that the increase be equal to council and was supported by council. The mayor's position is a full-time job.

The councillors are almost full time as there is so much demand in their time.

The comparator communities are Caledon, Clarington, Ajax, Aurora, Guelph, Milton, New Market and Waterloo.

Mayor Rick Bonnette

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