



Facebook CEO Zuckerberg grilled on Capitol Hill: What to expect

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Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg will testify on Capitol Hill this week after a third party accessed the personal information of as many as 87 million of the social media platform's users.

In an era that seems to be defined by the struggle to protect consumer information online, the tech entrepreneur knows he will face some hard-hitting questions from lawmakers and has accepted full responsibility for the incident.

"It's clear now that we didn't do enough to prevent these tools from being used for harm as well," Zuckerberg wrote in prepared testimony released Monday, scheduled to be delivered on Wednesday before the House Energy and Commerce Committee. "That goes for fake news, foreign interference in elections, and hate speech, as well as developers and data privacy. We didn't take a broad enough view of our responsibility, and that was a big mistake. It was my mistake, and I'm sorry."

Zuckerberg was in D.C. on Monday for meetings with some lawmakers, including Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson.

The first hearing for Zuckerberg begins Tuesday before a joint hearing of the Senate judiciary and commerce committees. Here's what you can expect to hear from the Facebook CEO this week:

Data privacy

The big focus, of course, will be a conversation on securing user data after Cambridge Analytica was able to obtain personal information from Facebook users through its site.

On Monday, Facebook began to notify users if their data was at risk of being stolen by Cambridge Analytica.

While Zuckerberg is expecting to be questioned about security, he may not be prepared for exactly how lawmakers are likely to grill him.

“I think the focus will overwhelmingly be on privacy – extending to Facebook’s practices generally, not just Cambridge Analytica – though I expect it to be less a traditional series of questions and more the sort of performative outrage and ritual humiliation session that traditionally follows scandals of various kinds,” Julian Sanchez, senior fellow at the Cato Institute, told FOX Business.

Russia and the 2016 election

During the 2016 presidential campaign, a Russian group was able to flood the social media site with propaganda ads and false information. Facebook said fake Russian accounts bought more than \$100,000 worth of ads.

As the 2018 midterm elections approach, concern over the company’s ability to prevent a similar situation is likely to be a focus this week, Sanchez said, especially for Democrats considering that President Donald Trump won the election.

Zuckerberg has released a proposed remedy to let only verified users run electoral or issue ads, which will be marked as political ads. The site will also indicate these ads have been paid for.

These measures may not do too much good, Sanchez said, considering it would be relatively easy for foreign actors to circumvent them.

Political bias

Facebook came under fire during the 2016 election cycle when a former worker alleged that the company’s “news curators” selected what went into the site’s trending stories section and routinely left out news regarding popular conservative people and topics due to their own political biases.

The same worker also said these curators would sometimes place stories into the highlighted section that weren’t trending at all.

Sanchez noted conservatives in Congress might feel compelled to bring up the fact that the social media site appears to be “seeking to dampen their message.”

He won’t say much

While lawmakers may have a multitude of questions for Zuckerberg, the CEO may be tight-lipped on some issues. That’s because what he says at these hearings can be used against the company in civil lawsuits, according to criminal defense attorney Brian Claypool.

While there are some lawsuits that have already been filed over the Cambridge Analytica data breach, the company could face more in the future, Claypool said, which will dictate legally how Zuckerberg answers certain questions.

“This could become an even bigger gorilla for [Facebook] to contend with since you now go from civil liability to a potential criminal investigation, where emails between [Facebook] and

Cambridge could be subpoenaed,” Claypool told FOX Business. “The congressional subcommittee should catch him off guard and ask Zuckerberg about FB’s relationship with Cambridge Analytica.”

Other scandals

Facebook has come under public scrutiny for a myriad of other issues over recent years, including the live broadcasts of user suicides. It was also revealed by TechCrunch that Zuckerberg secretly deleted some of his personal messages in the wake of the Sony hack, while users are unable to do the same.