



Chairman Greg Walden  
Ranking Member Frank Pallone  
Energy and Commerce Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives

(via email)

January 2nd, 2019

Dear Chairman Walden and Ranking Member Pallone,

We write with a clarification to the record related to your Committee's ongoing work investigating Facebook's data governance and privacy practices. As you know, revelations about some of Facebook's dubious practices have surfaced in 2018 with alarming frequency. Mozilla first raised [concerns](#) earlier this year, [suspending our advertising](#) on Facebook and giving people [tools](#) to keep Facebook contained. As news has unfolded, we have continued to call out Facebook's seeming disregard for users' right to control their data and [asked Facebook directly](#) to address the problems.

During your July inquiry into Facebook's platform data governance and privacy practices, Facebook's answers to questions for the record included two references to Mozilla. These answers referred to an ongoing "partnership" with Mozilla concerning browser notifications.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, reports came out in late December about Facebook's data sharing with "integration partners." Facebook's response to these allegations again included a vague reference to work with Mozilla.

We believe these representations made by Facebook are inaccurate. Mozilla is not a Facebook data partner and we do not collect information from Facebook about its users. As we discussed in June, we have done a review of our agreements with Facebook, and can find no relevant agreement that would govern such a partnership. We have written to Facebook directly asking them to clarify for us what partnership they are referring to and whether there is a legal agreements in place concerning that partnership. Facebook has not responded to our enquiries.

Mozilla has worked with Facebook in the [past](#).<sup>2</sup> Given the reach and demand for their platform, you would be hard pressed to find a company that hasn't. We have been open and honest about [this](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Facebook's filing with the Committee stated that "We also will continue partnerships with Mozilla, Alibaba and Opera— which enable people to receive notifications about Facebook in their web browsers."

<sup>2</sup> From our June [blog post](#): Mozilla Corporation recently received two termination notices from Facebook about work that we did with them in the past. These appear to be part of Facebook's broader effort to clean up its third-party developer ecosystem. This is good – we suspect that we weren't the only ones receiving these notices. Still, the notices, and recent reporting of Facebook data sharing with device makers, prompted us to take a closer look at our past relationships with the company and we think it is important to talk about what we found.

past work. In addition, the Firefox web browser does currently support standard push notifications from Facebook, as it would do from any other site across the internet. That system<sup>3</sup> uses a [public API](#) that is available to any sites across the web. Myriad sites across the internet use this push notification system. We would not consider any of those sites 'partners' by virtue of their use of a publicly available push system. The push notification system that is integrated into the Firefox web browser is the result of a set of design principles that are intended to meaningfully protect and empower our users. Those design principles are all too often not followed by much of the technology industry.

Mozilla has a long, established track record of working to protect our users privacy and to create a healthier, more secure internet. Like most technology companies that build and deploy complex products, we have also made mistakes with respect to our users privacy and security. Where we have made mistakes, we have acted quickly to correct them and have been open and honest about what occurred. Those are not claims that most in our industry can make. Rather, many companies across the web are working in the service of a less secure, less transparent internet. This is why we take misrepresentations by Facebook about our users privacy very seriously.

We strongly support the work of your Committee to understand the extensive data sharing practiced by Facebook. Please let us know if you would like further information about our past work with Facebook, about our push notification system, or about the privacy practices followed by Mozilla generally.

Sincerely,

Marshall Erwin  
Senior Director of Trust & Security  
Mozilla, Corp.

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<sup>3</sup> The *Web Push* protocol was developed by Mozilla and other industry leaders through an open standards development process at the Internet Engineering Task Force and the World Wide Web Consortium. The protocol was designed in such a way that Mozilla cannot access the messages sent by sites to users. Mozilla's technical implementation of the Web Push standard - meaning the actual system used to provide push notification to the Firefox browser - was designed after extensive review by Mozilla's privacy and security experts. The notification API - which allows web developers to utilize Mozilla's push system - is publicly available to any site across the web.



