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#1 Mobile App Garneres Concerns Over Data Privacy

[CYBERSECURITY](#), [TECHNOLOGY](#)

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If you haven't already downloaded FaceApp, you have probably either heard of it or witnessed your Facebook turn from an office party to a nursing home overnight. This free mobile app leverages state-of-the-art technology to allow the user to transform facial photos in a variety of ways. It's most commonly utilized for its aging feature, which colors hair, adds wrinkles and occasionally an excellent mustache, bringing you from sun-kissed to sun spots in seconds. Due to its remarkably accurate results and celebrity endorsements, FaceApp went from the 392nd most popular app on the app store to 1st within a span of five days. However, the app's marketing success and ability to manipulate photos isn't the only reason it has been in the news lately. With a vague privacy policy and Russian origins, many users have also been asking questions about how FaceApp handles and stores their personal data.

Reading through FaceApp's privacy policy reveals a little more about the company. To start, they store data in the cloud, not locally; this means that every time you modify a photo, that photo is transferred, stored and edited remotely on servers not owned by FaceApp. This raises concerns that personal information is being sent overseas to servers with potential ties to the Russian government. Additionally, their privacy policy explicitly states, "FaceApp cannot ensure the security of any information you transmit to FaceApp or guarantee that information on the Service may not be accessed, disclosed, altered, or destroyed". FaceApp publicly responded to these speculations saying, "... most images are deleted from our servers within 48 hours from the upload date". They also explained that they don't sell or share user data with any third parties and that user data is never transferred to Russia. However, included within their terms and conditions is this concerning sentence: "You grant FaceApp a perpetual, irrevocable, nonexclusive, royalty-free, worldwide, fully-paid, transferable sub-licensable license to use, reproduce, modify, adapt, publish, translate, create derivative works from, distribute, publicly perform and display your User Content." According to this contract, which you consent to upon using the app, even upon reaching the "after" age of your photos, FaceApp is just getting started on its license to use your photos for all of perpetuity. ([Public Statements](#))

While there is no evidence that FaceApp has done anything illegal or even morally corrupt, there is still reason to be skeptical of them. Their public statements may be intended to make you feel safer, but there is no existing evidence to back up any of their comments. Without an independent review of the corporation by a reputable third party or stricter government regulations, all a user can do is take the company's word and hope for the best.

You may be wondering, "What would even happen if FaceApp did sell that selfie I just took?" At this point in time, it is impossible to comprehend all of the potential implications, as the capabilities and requirements of governments and organizations are evolving rapidly alongside technology. At present, however, this information can be used to train stronger Artificial Intelligence, recognize you in a crowd or create fake social media profiles and videos. So while all of this may not sound overly alarming, it is still best to avoid putting

yourself in these situations. Artificial Intelligence has been growing at an exponential rate, so there's no telling to what extent your data could be used for in the future.

Our Advice:

We always recommend using cell phone applications carefully, and FaceApp is no exception. Although there is no evidence to indicate that FaceApp has done anything malicious or morally corrupt, it's always best to proceed with caution. If you do decide to use FaceApp, you should use it the way you would use any other social media: always ask permission before editing pictures of your friends or family and make sure not to upload any pictures that you wouldn't post publicly online.

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