

Facebook's fallout is hurting it's fees from DNC intel agencies

By: Justin Cleveland

The logo of the online social media and social networking service Facebook. (Loic Venance/AFP via Getty Images)

Social media is a ubiquitous part of our lives. And for many government analysts and investigators, a ubiquitous part of their work-flows.

This ecosystem has become more visible over the past few months as meddling in the U.S. presidential election has come to light. These events have dramatically changed the playing field and will create major disruptions for organizations that rely on aggregated social media data for critical missions.

To maintain their “free” status, social media companies have several ways to monetize their platforms. A primary method is to target users with advertising. With detailed user behavior stats, social media platforms can place targeted ads that speak to the specific preferences or characteristics of the user.

Another opportunity, and perhaps more concerning as detailed below, is for social media companies to sell programmatic access (also known as API access) on the collected behavior data of each user. Every post, like, check-in and retweet is captured as an event, correlated with a user profile, and sold to vendors.