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The online community is all abuzz on Sunday after an explosive report has accused Facebook of snooping in smartphone usersâ€™ text messages.

Though Facebook admitted to reading SMS of users who have downloaded their app, they said they are only doing so as part of a limited testing phase prior to launching their own messaging service and not to deliberately expose users to fraud.

The Facebook app running on Android is authorized to process, read, receive and write SMS, something they have declared in their terms beginning from the 1.7 version. Facebook said this is in anticipation of new features that will integrate Facebook tools with user texts. Now, if Facebook eventually introduces a feature that will be applicable to those permissions, they are ensuring the users even now that it will be accompanied by proper educational and guiding materials.

Facebook retorted that users should be aware that it said it might access their messages, contained under â€œPermissionsâ€• â€” that long article you are expected to have read before downloading/using th app. Unfortunately, 70% of smartphone users do not seem to have the time for reading the terms and conditions attached to an app.

Other popular companies that are using smartphones to access data and other personal details of users include Yahoo Messenger, Badoo, Google and Flickr.

Several companies can reportedly control smartphone features remotely, which includes taking images and video using the camera, as in the case of YouTube. Also, details like contacts list, location and browser history are accessed and can be passed on to third-parties like advertisers.

According to a statement issued by Facebook, it does not read user text messages and described the Sunday Times report as â€˜completely wrongâ€™ on their terminology and the impression they have made. But Facebook gave an explanation anyway: â€œâ€¦we have done some testing of products that need the SMS part of the phone to talk to our app.â€•

Privacy concerns on smartphones have steadily increased in the past weeks as it was found out that a popular Android and iOS app, Path, is discovered to be collecting user contact details without permission â€” a move that can make users vulnerable to fraud. Other smaller companies that produce apps are capable of intercepting user calls like Tennis Juggling Game and My Remote Lock, which is supposed to be a security app to boot.

Just this month, Twitter has admitted that it has they have copied entire address books of their users from mobile phones. They have stored the data on their servers for 18 months without the users realizing it.

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