

Technology

Spotify's new privacy policy angers users

By Zoe Kleinman
Technology reporter, BBC News

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Spotify has 20 million subscribers and 75 million users worldwide

Some high-profile Spotify users say they have left the music service over changes in its terms and conditions.

The streaming platform now wants access to pictures, contact phone numbers and sensor data stored on the user's smartphone as well as permission to view social media activity.

Minecraft creator Markus Persson, aka Notch, tweeted to his 2.4m followers that he has cancelled his account.

Spotify said the changes would help it "tailor improved user experience".

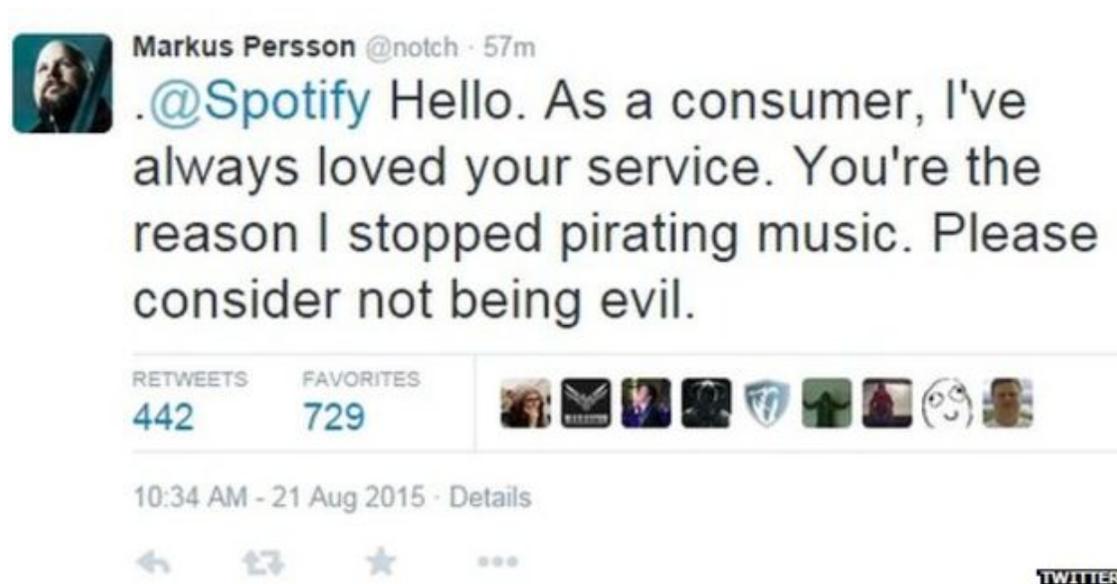
Sensor data, such as how fast the user's phone is moving, helped the Swedish firm develop Spotify Running, a new feature that tailors music playlists to physical activity.

"Spotify is constantly innovating and evolving its service to deliver the best possible experience for our users. This means delivering the perfect recommendations for every moment, and helping you to enjoy, discover and share more music than ever before," Spotify said in a statement.

"Throughout, the privacy and security of our customers' data is - and will remain - Spotify's highest priority.

"We will always ask for individual permission or clearly inform you of the ability to opt out from sharing location, photos, voice and contacts."

The firm has 75 million active users and 20 million subscribers in 58 countries, according to its own figures.



The terms and conditions also state that it is up to the user to ensure that people listed in the contacts list on their handset are happy for their phone number to be shared with the music platform.

"Local law may require that you seek the consent of your contacts to provide their personal information to Spotify, which may use that information for the purposes specified in this privacy policy," reads the update.

'Jealous ex'

There has been some angry reaction to the changes.

"Like a jealous ex, Spotify wants to see (and collect) your photos and see who you're talking to," wrote Wired magazine.

"I'm now considering whether the £10 I pay for a premium membership is worth it, given the amount of privacy I'd be giving away by consenting," wrote Forbes reporter Thomas Fox-Brewster.

Markus Persson tweeted the company direct.

"As a consumer, I've always loved your service. You're the reason I stopped pirating music. Please consider not being evil," he wrote.

In a blogpost, Spotify said its new terms were updated in the interests of transparency.

"We want to be as open and transparent as possible when it comes to how we describe our business, how we work with advertisers, what information we collect, and what we do with it," the post said.

"We also want to make sure our terms are up-to-date with all the latest features we are offering."

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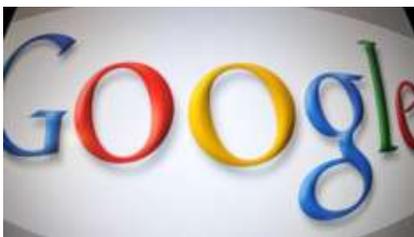
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