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## TECHNOLOGY

# Tim Cook May Have Just Ended Facebook Looks like it's no more Mr. Nice Guy. 🔒

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Tim Cook. Getty Images

What happens when an unstoppable force hits an immovable object?

In a recent speech in Brussels marking International Data Privacy Day, Apple CEO Tim Cook went on the offensive against Mark Zuckerberg and Facebook. Cook's speech seems to be a direct response to Facebook's recent attack on Apple, in which the world's largest social network took out full-page ads in several newspapers attacking Apple's new privacy changes.

But what's most fascinating is that Cook took direct aim at Facebook without ever mentioning the company by name.

Just check out the following excerpt:

*"Technology does not need vast troves of personal data stitched together across dozens of websites and apps in order to succeed. Advertising existed and thrived for decades without it, and we're here today because the path of least resistance is rarely the path of wisdom.*

*"If a business is built on misleading users on data exploitation, on choices that are no choices at all, then it does not deserve our praise. It deserves reform.*

*"We should not look away from the bigger picture. In a moment of rampant disinformation and conspiracy theories juiced by algorithms, we can no longer turn a blind eye to a theory of technology that says all engagement is good engagement, the longer the better, and all with the goal of collecting as much data as possible.*

*"Too many are still asking the question 'How much can we get away with?' when they need to be asking 'What are the consequences?'*

*"What are the consequences of prioritizing conspiracy theories and violent incitement simply because of the high rates of engagement?*

*"What are the consequences of not just tolerating but rewarding content that undermines public trust in life-saving vaccinations?*

*"What are the consequences of seeing thousands of users joining extremist groups and then perpetuating an algorithm that recommends even more?*

*"It is long past time to stop pretending that this approach doesn't come with a cost. A polarization of lost trust, and yes, of violence.*

*"A social dilemma cannot be allowed to become a social catastrophe."*

The fact that Cook *doesn't* name Facebook somehow increases its impact. Because as you hear Cook's 's speech, you can't help but immediately think of the house that Zuckerberg built.

If you're wondering how Apple and Facebook ended up at odds, [you can read more of the details here](#). But the reality is these two tech giants have been heading toward a major conflict for quite some time.

The problem is that Apple's and Facebook's business philosophies are diametrically opposed to each other.

Apple is a lifestyle brand. And part of the lifestyle Apple sells is users having more control over their privacy.

Facebook, on the other hand, is in the data business. The more data it collects on users, the more effectively it can sell targeted ads.

But collecting and selling all that data comes at great cost, as Cook highlights. "The end result of all of this is that you are no longer the customer," said Cook. "You are the product."

Cook went on to further highlight the differences in Apple's and Facebook's philosophies, in no uncertain terms.

"We believe that ethical technology is technology that works for you," said Cook. "It's technology that helps you sleep, not keeps you up. It tells you when you've had enough. It gives you space to create or draw or write or learn, not refresh just one more time."

At first glimpse, it might appear that Apple and Facebook are on diverging paths. But in reality, they're on a collision course.

So, what *does* happen when an unstoppable force hits an immovable object?

One of them gets destroyed.

## **The takeaway**

There are major lessons here for entrepreneurs and business owners.

As Cook aptly points out, "advertising existed and thrived for decades" *without* using data that was collected in less than transparent ways. And as customers are offered more choice when it

comes to how apps and websites track their data, experts predict that more and more people will opt out of said tracking.

If you're an advertiser, you'll need to adapt. Or die.

But there's also a bigger lesson at stake.

Now is the time to ask yourself: Which philosophy do I want to pursue? Do I want a business that serves my customers? Or one that takes advantage of customers to serve my business?

Because in the end, only one of these philosophies is sustainable for the long-term. The other will lead you to crash and burn.

And while the long-term solution may initially prove more challenging, remember:

"The path of least resistance is rarely the path of wisdom."

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