



ATTORNEY GENERAL GEORGE JEPSEN

ATTORNEY GENERAL RAISES PRIVACY CONCERNS ABOUT FACEBOOK'S "TAG SUGGESTIONS" FEATURE

For Immediate Release

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HARTFORD – Attorney General George Jepsen is concerned that consumer privacy is being compromised by Facebook's "Tag Suggestions" feature on its popular social media website and is seeking a meeting with company officials to address those issues.

The new feature uses facial recognition software to identify Facebook users in photographs, links the photograph with the user's name and stores the information in the company's database without the user being notified. Prior to this change, users had to manually tag others in photos, and those identified were then notified of the tag.

"In Facebook's desire to promote photo sharing and tagging among its users, it appears to have overlooked a critical component of consumer privacy protection – an opt-in requiring users to affirmatively consent" before Facebook can use those images, Jepsen wrote in a letter Tuesday to Facebook's director of public policy and its product and regulatory counsel.

"The lack of an opt-in process for Facebook users is troubling because unknowing consumers may have their photos tagged and matched using facial recognition software without their express consent, potentially exposing them to unwelcome attention and loss of privacy," Jepsen wrote. "Consumers must be aware that the digital images of their faces are being coupled by Facebook technology with personal information in their Facebook profiles."

Jepsen asked the company for a meeting "as soon as possible" to answer questions and address the privacy issues. Among the concerns is whether facial recognition data will be used for commercial or marketing purposes and whether the "Tag Suggestions" feature can be used by private individuals to gain access to user information, which may be misused.

"The potential uses of facial recognition on this scale remain unclear, but concerning," Jepsen wrote. "This important privacy issue needs to be addressed promptly."

Assistant Attorney General Matthew Fitzsimmons is representing Jepsen in this matter.

View entire letter to [Facebook](#) – (PDF-215KB)

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CONTACT: *Susan E. Kinsman*, susan.kinsman@ct.gov; 860-808-5324; cell: 860-478-9581
[Facebook.com/AGGeorgeJepsen](https://www.facebook.com/AGGeorgeJepsen); [Twitter.com/AGJepsen](https://twitter.com/AGJepsen);