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# Facebook hires EU lobbyist



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WRITTEN BY  
Jennifer Scott

***Facebook announced this week the appointment of a director of European Public Policy.***

NEWS

Facebook has hired an ex-[Liberal Democrat](#) MP to lobby the [European Union](#) on the company's behalf.

1 Jul, 2009

Richard Allan, former MP and previous director of European Government affairs at [Cisco](#), has taken on the role of director of European Public Policy for the social networking site to ensure the company's voice is heard when relevant topics are discussed by EU legislators.

A spokesperson from Facebook told *IT PRO*: "As we continue to grow in Europe, it is our goal to provide the best possible experience for people using Facebook, from users and developers to advertisers and governments."

"As part of our continued commitment to maintaining close relationships with European regulators, policymakers and organisations, Richard Allan has been appointed as Facebook's Director of European Public Policy."

The company would not give more details on what the role entails, but an analyst said Facebook's continually debated [privacy issues](#) may come into play.

Jeremiah Owyang, an analyst at [Forrester](#), said: "Facebook's strategy is to let its social experience spread beyond its website, and allow people to access their friends on other third party websites using their login features (Facebook Connect). As a result, the Facebook experience is destined to be iniquitous."

"This sets off alarms with cultures concerned about privacy, as well as governmental agencies and task forces," he added. "Expect privacy, and ownership over user data to be one of the top debated topics in the next few coming years."

Other commentators agreed that privacy will be paramount.

Rory Cellan-Jones, technology reporter for the [BBC](#), said on his [blog](#): "With the EU mulling over tighter privacy rules for firms that share their users' data, and with continuing concern from politicians about issues like cyber-bullying and hate-speak on social networks, there will be plenty on Mr Allan's plate."

Facebook also announced a similar role in Washington for Timothy Sparapani, a former lawyer for the American Civil Liberties Union.

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