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BUSINESS

Zuckerberg no-show highlights Facebook's bad business model

By [Jonathon Trugman](#)

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A view of the International Grand Committee with representation from nine countries' parliaments and Mark Zuckerberg's non-attendance.

Reuters

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg ducked the wrath of the world last week when he refused to hear London calling.

The quiet one was even trolled by politicians from nine countries with [photos of his empty House of Commons seat](#) and name placard on Twitter.

The occasion drawing ire across the globe was the UK's International Grand Committee's hearing on fake news and disinformation.

It was the first time since 1933 foreign politicians had been invited to a hearing at Britain's House of Commons.

That's important to show up for, rather than send a VP, which Zuckerberg did.

Later in the week, [the Wall Street Journal got hold of some unredacted emails](#) and notes that seem to state pretty clearly that Facebook does indeed “exchange value” (my words) for “access” to data sets. And that they did indeed explore charging “users” for data.

Facebook does not define the user as someone using the service. No, it means someone who can then sell our data to a third party — who in turn bundles the data and sells it to advertisers.

An equally outrageous offense is that 2.2 billion people who log in and use Facebook are in a sense treated like second-class users.

The true users are the product Facebook is selling.

This is why I suggested two weeks ago that Facebook should charge its users (the ones who log in) a monthly fee.

It would provide a revenue stream for the social network and also provide a paper trail of verified people to reduce the fake news proffered on the site.

The emails indicate that Facebook did at least consider charging the log-in users, soon after its IPO.

So just rip the Band-Aid off already and charge everybody \$5 a month or \$1.99 — it doesn't really matter — and let the real users know their data is their own.

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