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Crisis Communication Strategy: A Rhetorical Analysis of Meta Platforms' Public Statements on Data Privacy

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Crisis Communication Strategy: A Rhetorical Analysis of Meta Platforms' Public

Statements on Data Privacy

The press releases made by Meta Platforms regarding the data privacy disclose a data protection communication plan that is well-calibrated and balances between compliance, ethical reframing, and strategic transparency. Following an ongoing regulatory investigation and mistrust among the general population, Meta has been trying to rebuild its corporate identity by positioning itself as a technologically progressive and privacy-aware player. Rhetorical analysis of these statements shows that the discourse of Meta is based on legal compliance, reputational repair, and positioning in the market.

Meta often conceptualizes its privacy practices through the lens of compliance and integrity at the institutional level of ethos. Daza-Ramirez (2025) claims that the privacy governance of Meta is characterized by the shift to the so-called frameworks of excellence, with their focus on systematic compliance tools and internal responsibility. This framing is reflected in public communications through foregrounding investment in data protection infrastructure, independent oversight, and user control functions. This discourse has a rhetorical purpose of imbuing a sense of responsibility and professionalism, and it makes the company operate within current regulatory standards. Nevertheless, the focus on procedural adherence also diverts concentration to structural arguments about platform capitalism, making privacy a technical issue, but not a structural problem.

This reframing is more evident when looking into the ethical and legal aspects of the data practices of Meta. As Frichot (2025) emphasises, there is a conflict between the planetary data collection models and the new international privacy regulations. The official pronouncements of Meta tend to admit regulatory requirements and, at the same time, justify the need for data-driven personalization as a core part of the user experience and innovation. Meta also ties moral words to economic arguments to create a myth where privacy protections and data monetization

do not oppose each other. This rhetorical act of balancing alleviates the pronouncement of exploitation without relinquishing the logic behind the business models that are based on surveillance.

In fact, the limitations of the rhetorical repositioning carried out by Meta are accentuated by criticism of the concept of capitalist surveillance. Mbuthia (2024) argues that social networks like Meta sell personal information in a manner that essentially undermines the privacy rights. Although the crisis communication of Meta focuses on the principles of user empowerment, such as consent tools, transparency reports, and privacy dashboards, such practices can be interpreted as compromising strategies aimed at maintaining legitimacy instead of redesigning the data extraction processes. The language of choice and control, therefore, plays the ideological role in the sense that it promotes the image of user agency and maintains unequal power relations.

The strains of international regulatory divergence are also contained in the discourse of Meta. Hassani (2025) illustrates the differences in the application of privacy governance in different jurisdictions, especially those pertaining to the European and non-Western regulatory ecosystems. As a reaction, the official messages by Meta tend to be regionally focused, highlighting its compliance with the data protection frameworks and regulations of the digital services offered by the European Union. The argument by Islam (2025) is that Meta has adopted the concept of algorithmic transparency within Europe, but this is not a one-sided initiative, but rather a competitive-advantage-oriented strategy. Transparency can be presented as innovation, not concession, which makes regulatory compliance become an indication of corporate leadership at Meta. This stroke of rhetoric re-packaged the crisis as an opportunity, which strengthens the brand of Meta as a flexible and progressive company.

The introduction of new apps, including Threads, makes what Meta says about its privacy even more complex. According to Vasilopoulos (2024), the new ecosystem expansions continue to demonstrate the long-standing weakness of privacy protection, despite the fact that Meta

affirms its willingness to protect the effectiveness of user data protection. Meta also preemptively responds to the critique expected of the products through its statements on product launches, in which it usually predicts increased security features and user controls. This anticipatory rhetoric is indicative of an affirmative crisis communication approach in which reputational risk is contained in the anticipation of a fully developed controversy.

Overall, the rhetorical approach that Meta uses in its statements about data privacy is advanced and based on the principles of compliance discourse, ethical reframing, and transparency in strategy. Meta aims to regain trust without any harm to its data-driven business model by introducing regulatory alignment and user control as innovation and empowerment. The incorporation of the ideas of modern-day scholarship shows that the crisis communication at Meta is not reacting to the criticism, but retelling the vocabulary of the discussion and redefining privacy as a controlled risk in platform capitalism and not a fundamental threat to its very nature.