# Meta’s Ray-Ban Glasses Gen 3 may spark privacy backlash over facial recognition tech



Meta has established itself as a formidable player in the smart glasses market, particularly with its popular Ray-Ban collaboration, which has seen over two million units sold since their launch in 2023. As the company gears up for the anticipated release of the Meta Ray-Ban Glasses Gen 3 at the upcoming Meta Connect 2025 in September, it aims to retain its lead with innovative features. Yet, one reported enhancement threatens to overshadow their progress due to rising privacy concerns.

According to reports, Meta is exploring the use of facial recognition technology in these glasses. This revelation comes amidst a climate of heightened scrutiny regarding privacy, especially following significant legal and ethical discussions surrounding facial recognition systems. Although Meta has yet to comment on these reports, the notion of integrating such technology has been circulating within the company's executive circles, including CEO Mark Zuckerberg.

Facial recognition technology, while hailed for its innovative potential, presents serious privacy implications. Critics argue that smart glasses equipped with such capabilities could operate as pervasive surveillance devices, capturing not just images but also sensitive information. For instance, there have been alarming cases where the glasses' technology was piloted by Harvard students who demonstrated the alarming ease of identifying and retrieving personal information about individuals in public. Through a combination of streaming technology and AI, they successfully accessed details such as names, addresses, and familial connections, showcasing just how vulnerable public spaces could become to data misuse.

Privacy concerns surrounding Meta's products are not new. The company has faced significant backlash in the past, notably settling a $1.4 billion lawsuit in Texas over the illegal harvesting of citizens' biometric data without consent. This settlement was a response to claims that Facebook’s facial recognition features had violated Texas state laws by collecting data from millions without informed user agreements. Following this debacle, Meta ceased its facial recognition programme in 2021, but the discussions about reintroducing similar features in new products indicate a troubling trend.

Moreover, the Meta Ray-Ban glasses are designed with multiple AI capabilities, including audio-visual recording functionality. These features raise questions about data consent and the storage of users' personal information. Notably, a recent update to Meta’s privacy policy eliminated the option for users to disable the recording of voice command data, effectively mandating that users’ queries related to AI interactions are stored on Meta's cloud servers for training purposes. This move has led to fears that user privacy is being compromised in the pursuit of advancing AI technology.

The integration of facial recognition within wearable devices like smart glasses poses a risk of misuse that cannot be overlooked. Commentators and privacy advocates have issued stark warnings regarding the potential for these tools to facilitate stalking, harassment, and the unauthorized collection of data. Such capabilities could profoundly alter personal interactions and public safety, necessitating a reevaluation of how such technology is implemented and governed.

As Meta continues to push the boundaries of wearable technology, the allure of enhanced AI functionalities clashes with pressing ethical considerations. There is an urgent need for regulatory frameworks that ensure user consent and privacy safeguards remain paramount. As the company prepares to unveil its next generation of smart glasses, observers will be keenly watching how it balances innovation with the essential responsibility to protect its users' privacy in an increasingly connected world.

### Reference Map

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Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

* <https://www.laptopmag.com/ai/metas-smart-glasses-may-include-controversial-ai-feature-privacy-concerns> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.ft.com/content/faedc975-7a9b-4632-bc6e-3e2ea71587c1> - Meta has agreed to pay $1.4 billion to Texas to settle claims over the illegal harvesting of millions of citizens' biometric data. This settlement addresses allegations that Facebook's facial recognition system collected biometric identifiers from photos and videos without informed consent, violating a 2009 Texas state law. Meta ceased using its facial recognition system in 2021, citing legal uncertainties, and erased the biometric data from 1 billion users. This settlement reflects growing global concerns over privacy risks linked to facial recognition.
* <https://theconversation.com/metas-ai-powered-smart-glasses-raise-concerns-about-privacy-and-user-data-238191> - Meta's Ray-Ban smart glasses, launched in 2021, have raised privacy concerns due to their AI capabilities. The glasses feature cameras, microphones, and touch panels, allowing users to capture photos and videos. However, images captured are sent to Meta's cloud for AI processing, where they are stored and used to train Meta's AI systems. This raises questions about user consent and the potential misuse of personal data, especially considering Meta's history of privacy issues and its reliance on user data for advertising.
* <https://www.forbes.com/sites/johnkoetsier/2024/10/03/metas-ray-ban-smart-glasses-used-to-instantly-dox-strangers-in-public-thanks-to-ai-and-facial-recognition/> - Two Harvard University students demonstrated how Meta's Ray-Ban smart glasses, combined with facial recognition technology, can instantly identify strangers in public and access their personal information. By streaming video from the glasses to Instagram and using AI to detect faces, they were able to retrieve individuals' names, addresses, and family details. This showcases the potential for misuse of such technology, highlighting significant privacy concerns associated with wearable devices equipped with AI and facial recognition capabilities.
* <https://www.reuters.com/legal/transactional/meta-settle-texas-lawsuit-over-facebook-facial-recognition-data-2024-05-31/> - Meta has agreed to settle a lawsuit filed by the state of Texas, which accused the company of illegally collecting biometric data of millions of Texans through facial-recognition technology without obtaining their consent. The lawsuit targeted Facebook's 'Tag Suggestions' feature, which suggested tagging friends in photos. Meta claims to have provided clear notices and control options for users. The settlement terms were not disclosed, and both parties have requested a 30-day pause to finalize the settlement and present it to the court.
* <https://www.tomsguide.com/opinion/facebook-smart-glasses-could-have-facial-recognition-heres-why-thats-a-terrible-idea> - The potential integration of facial recognition into Facebook's smart glasses raises significant privacy and safety concerns. Such technology could enable individuals to identify and access personal information of strangers in public spaces without consent. This capability poses risks, including stalking and unauthorized data collection, highlighting the need for careful consideration and regulation before implementing facial recognition in wearable devices.
* <https://indianexpress.com/article/technology/artificial-intelligence/meta-smart-glasses-privacy-nightmare-student-project-9601890/> - Two Harvard University students demonstrated how Meta's smart glasses, combined with facial recognition technology, can be used to identify individuals and access their personal information in real-time. By pairing the glasses with online tools and apps, they were able to retrieve classmates' names, addresses, and family details, raising significant privacy concerns about the potential misuse of such technology.