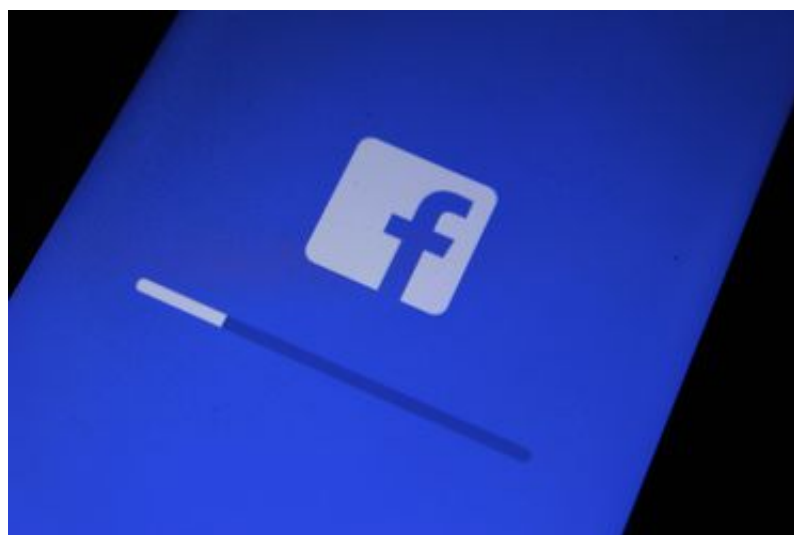


Quitting Facebook? Download your data before you go

What does Facebook know about you? Learn how to download your Facebook data to find out.

[Matt Elliott](#) March 30, 2018 2:18 PM PDT



Nasir Kachroo/NurPhoto via Getty Images

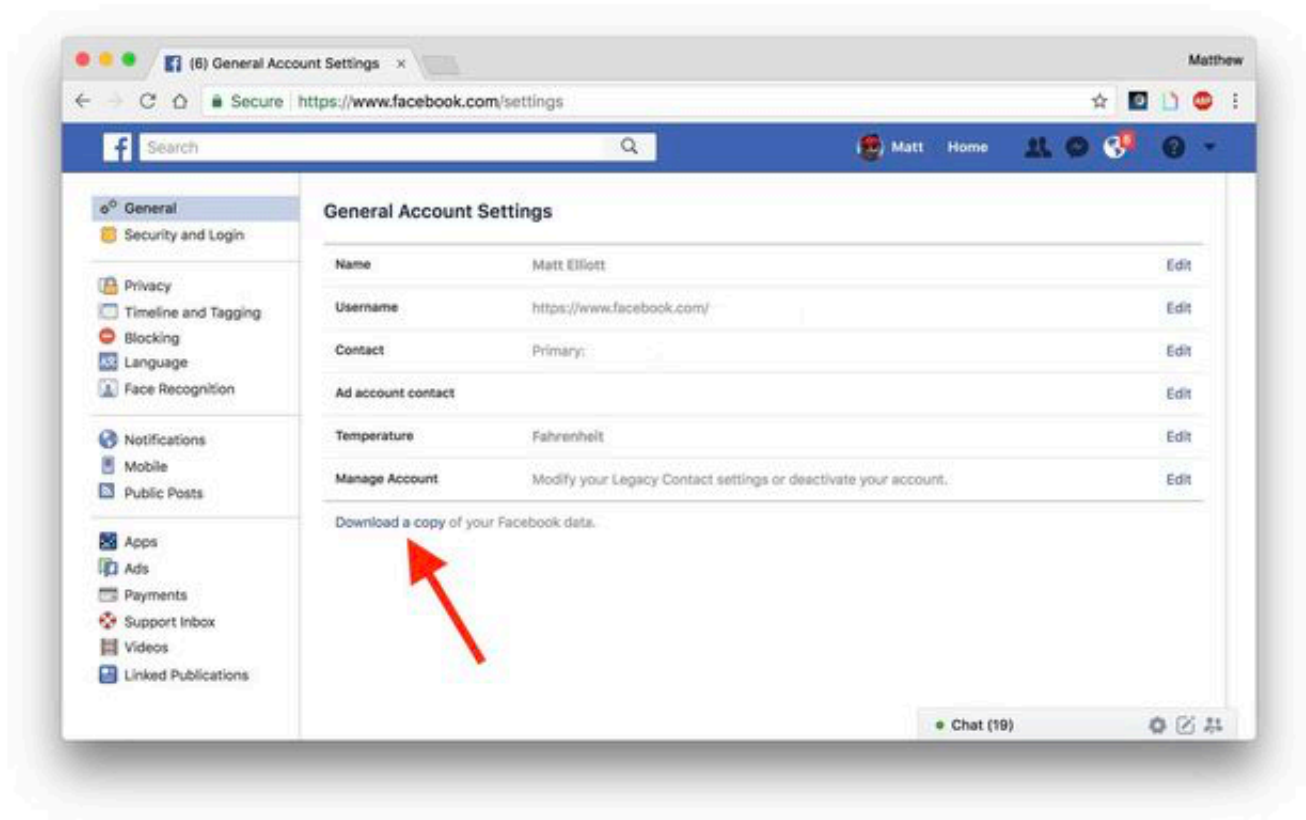
First, it was [Cambridge Analytica](#). Now, it's the [ugly truth memo](#). What's next?

If you are finally ready to quit [Facebook](#) once and for all, you should take your data -- all your posts and messages, photos and videos, friends and groups and so on -- with you before you go. Thankfully, Facebook makes it easy to download your data. So easy, in fact, that it's worth doing even if you aren't planning on deleting your Facebook account just to see what information Facebook has collected about you.

Download Facebook data

You'll need to use the web version of Facebook and not the mobile app to request your data. Here's how:

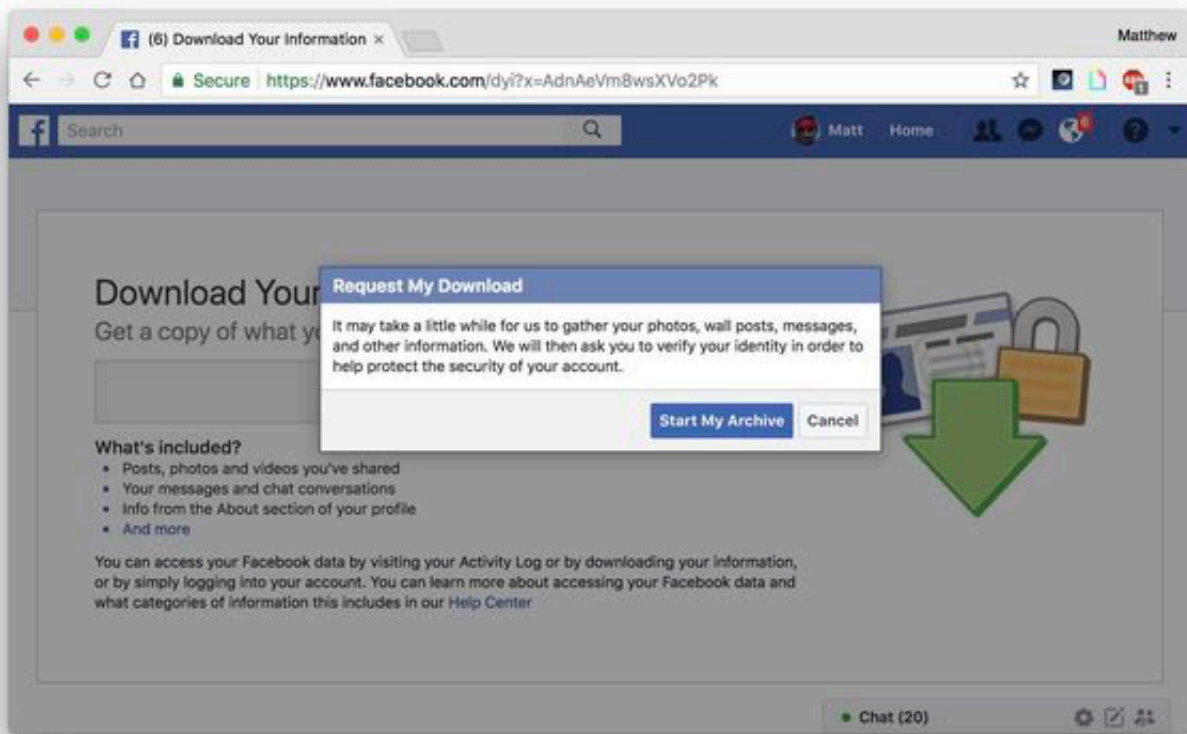
- Click the **little triangle** in the top right of any Facebook page and select **Settings**.
- You should be taken to the General view of Settings. If not, click **General** at the top of the left-hand column.
- At the bottom of the General Account Settings page, click **Download a copy of your Facebook data**.



Enlarge Image

Screenshot by Matt Elliott/CNET

- Click the **Start My Archive** button.
- Enter your password.
- On the Request My Download window that pops up, click another **Start My Archive** button to confirm your intentions.



Enlarge Image

Screenshot by Matt Elliott/CNET

After making your request, you can sit back and wait for Facebook to email you a link to download your data. If you don't get emails from Facebook, then check your Facebook notifications. Either way, you'll get a link to download a ZIP file of your Facebook data.

Now Playing: How to download your Facebook data

2:14

What's in your Facebook data

It was somewhere between eye-opening and frightening to see the information Facebook had about me. I've been on Facebook for over a decade but I'm not a heavy user -- much more of a lurker than sharer -- and

Facebook knew plenty about me.

My data was organized into four folders: html, messages, photos and videos. In the html folder, the ads file was illuminating; it showed the topics Facebook thinks are of interest to me along with all the ads I ever clicked on and a long list of advertisers that have my contact information. Similarly, the apps file showed an insanely long list of apps that I allowed to access my Facebook account. The timeline file contained a copy of my entire timeline activity, and the messages file had all of my Facebook Messenger conversations.

Meanwhile, the messages folder had copies of each individual Messenger conversation. The friends file was interesting because it showed not only the full list of my Facebook friends but also the date I befriended each.

Lastly, the photos and videos folders had copies of every photo and video I shared on Facebook. There were also photos and video files in the html folder, each of which opened a web page where I could easily scan the photos or videos I posted on Facebook, along with the comments they garnered.