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Facebook Warns 800,000 Users it Accidentally Unblocked People They had Blocked

Facebook is warning some 800,000 users that a bug caused the system to temporarily unblock some people that they had previously blocked. Facebook disclosed the bug in a blog post published on Monday, and said it meant blocked users could again see the profiles of people who had blocked them or send them messages — both things that a blocked user shouldn't want to do. It affected both the main Facebook platform and its messaging app, Messenger. The bug was live between May 29 and June 5, Facebook said, and has since been fixed. Users who were affected will receive a message from the company warning them about it. Of the 800,000-plus affected users, 83% (about 664,000 people) had one person they had blocked unblocked by the bug, while the remaining 17% (about 136,000 people) had more than one unblocked. Blocked users couldn't see posts shared by the person who blocked them that were only visible to their friends — but "someone who was unblocked might have been able to contact people on Messenger who had blocked them," the company says. This is a significant error from Facebook. Victims of harassment or of abusive ex-partners will sometimes use the block feature to prevent aggressors from contacting them or viewing their online activities. This bug could have given these bad actors an avenue back into their victims' online lives that shouldn't have been open to them.