

Alibaba's Jack Ma urges Facebook to fix privacy issues

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BOAO, China (Reuters) – Jack Ma, founder of Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba, on Monday urged Facebook Inc. to resolve its data privacy problems, a day before the social media giant's founder, Mark Zuckerberg, was due to appear at US congressional hearings.



Ma, speaking at the Boao Forum for Asia in China's southern Hainan province, was asked about privacy issues that have dogged Facebook in recent weeks after it said the personal information of up to 87 million users may have been improperly shared with political consultancy Cambridge Analytica.

"The senior management should take responsibility, say, hey, from now we start to work on it," Ma said after initially refraining from weighing in on the issue.

"I will not make a comment about Facebook, but I will say, Facebook, 15 years ago, they never expected this thing to grow like that," he said.

"Right, it's like a social network, it's got two billion people using it! So all of the problems they did not realize came up! It is the time we fix it," he said.

"But I think the problem would be solved, we should not kill the company because of these problems," Ma said, speaking in English.

Zuckerberg will appear before the US Senate Commerce and Judiciary Committees on Tuesday to address questions about how his company handles its users' data.

On Friday, Facebook backed proposed legislation requiring social media sites to disclose the identities of buyers of online political campaign ads and introduced a new verification process for people buying "issue" ads.

"The most important solution is, you respect the data, you respect the security, you respect the privacy," Ma said.