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Long-lasting FB access-token for server to pull FB page info

Asked 11 years, 9 months ago   Modified 4 months ago   Viewed 50k times

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I'm aware that there are many questions about Facebook access-tokens and the grief they cause, but despite much experimentation and reading many frustratingly vague blog articles (FB and otherwise), I'm still struggling to get a clear answer to my needs. Let me succinctly break down my process so far:

- I am creating a site that, server-side, needs to pull the posts/statuses from a single Facebook Page

- I am an admin of that Facebook Page

- I have created a Facebook App

- Using the Facebook Graph API Explorer, I've generated a short-lived key, connected to my app and my account, that grants permission to my account to view the access-tokens for my pages

- I've converted my short-lived key to a long-lived key (60 days) ala scenario 4 from this

And here's where I am stuck. My 60 day key works fine for my server to pull the info needed from the page, but as far I can tell, there's no way to programmatically extend that 60 day key. I also do not know of a way to generate a new short-lived key without manually going to the Facebook Graph API Explorer and creating one.

Since it is my server making the requests to the Facebook API and not a user-based system (where I could easily request that a user authorize the Facebook app again), this creates a very clunky system. Since Facebook deprecated `offline_access`, is there really no permanent way to have my server pull info from my own page? Will I really have to create a new key by hand and manually update my server with it every 60 days?

Or is there something I'm missing?

Update:

> *The step-by-step guide that was previously found here has been migrated down into its own* *answer*.

| facebook | facebook-graph-api | facebook-access-token |

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edited May 23, 2017 at 11:54   asked Aug 28, 2012 at 22:31

Community Bot   redhotvengeance
1   1   **27.7k**   11   50   54

This is awesome. I'm in the same situation and was looking for some info on this topic. Is it safe that this token doesn't break any FB platform policies? Just asking to be sure. – onigunn Sep 17, 2012 at 10:47

2   @asrijaal Facebook's own documentation (take a look at Scenario 5) says that these page access tokens do not expire. I'd say it's safe to assume that they comply with Facebook's policies. – redhotvengeance Sep 17, 2012 at 16:08

"I thought it'd be good to leave a clear step-by-step process" - heaven forbid :) Thanks @redhotvengeance – Steve McGill Apr 12, 2013 at 9:03

You have a typo with your page access token url. Should be a ? not a & after accounts. Spent a while trying to figure out why this wasn't working. :P – Joren Apr 15, 2013 at 21:33

1   than you so much for this. also- what the hell facebook – user151496 Nov 20, 2013 at 8:58 ✎

6 Answers

Sorted by: Highest score (default) ⇕

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These are the steps that were previously in the question - they have been migrated to this answer.

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Having found that it is possible to generate a Facebook Page Access Token that does not expire (with help from @Igy), here is a clear, step-by-step quide for all those looking to the same:

1. Make sure you are the admin of the FB page you wish to pull info from

2. Create a FB App (should be with the same user account that is the page admin)

3. Head over to the Facebook Graph API Explorer

4. On the top right, select the FB App you created from the "Application" drop down list

5. Click "Get Access Token"

6. Make sure you add the `manage_pages` permission

7. Convert this short-lived access token into a long-lived one by making this Graph API call:

   ```
   https://graph.facebook.com/oauth/access_token?client_id=<your FB App ID
   >&client_secret=<your FB App secret>&grant_type=fb_exchange_token&fb_exchange_token=
   <your short-lived access token>
   ```

8. Grab the new long-lived access token returned back

9. Make a Graph API call to see your accounts using the new long-lived access token:

   ```
   https://graph.facebook.com/me/accounts?access_token=<your long-lived access token>
   ```

10. Grab the `access_token` for the page you'll be pulling info from

11. [Lint](#) the token to see that it is set to `Expires: Never`!

That should do it. You should now have a Facebook Page Access Token that doesn't expire, unless:

- You change your Facebook account password

- You lose admin access for the target page

- You delete or de-authorize your Facebook App

Any of these will cause the access token to become invalid.

If you are getting `(#100) Tried accessing nonexisting field (accounts) on node type (Page)`, go to the [Access Token Debugger](#), copy the value of `User ID`, and use it to replace the "me" part of the URL in step 9.

Share Improve this answer Follow   edited Oct 21, 2015 at 23:03   answered Feb 21, 2014 at 7:11
                                                    Elad Nava   redhotvengeance
                                               7,836 2   42   61   **27.7k** 11   50   54

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3   How and where do I do step 6? – Stefan Müller Mar 30, 2014 at 21:23

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5   @StefanMüller When you click "Get Access Token" on the Graph API Explorer page, a "Select Permissions"
     dialogue pops up. The `manage_pages` option is under the `Extended Permissions` tab.
     – redhotvengeance Mar 30, 2014 at 22:53

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2   Great! This works like a charm, and this published as the PAGE, not as a user. – Benjamin Piette Apr 23,
     2014 at 13:44

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3   I believe this is out dated now. and you only get an access token which expires in about two months.
     – Qaiser Wali Aug 25, 2014 at 12:52

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7   I have done all of that now and it works except that the long-lived token id expires after 2 months and is
     not infinite. Also the Acces Token Debugger has a link at the bottom of the form to extend a short-lived
     access token to a long-lived access token. – Slim Oct 9, 2015 at 2:22 ✏

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17   This is covered in the [Offline Access deprecation](#) document

           Use the 60-day token for the page admin to retrieve a Page Access Token (via `/PAGE_ID?`
▼   `fields=access_token` or `/me/accounts`) - the Page access token will not have an expiry time

🔖   Share Improve this answer Follow   edited Feb 17, 2014 at 8:37   answered Aug 28, 2012 at 22:49
↺   Juan A. Navarro   lgy
                                                       10.7k 6   48   54   **43.8k** 8   90   115

5   Sigh. Indeed, this seems to be the ticket. I could have sworn that I tried every possible combination of these steps - apparently I missed the one that actually works. What an absolutely convoluted set of required actions. Thanks for much for your help! – redhotvengeance Aug 28, 2012 at 23:14

1   So many pieces all over the internet, this is one that actually works. – Ernesto May 5, 2016 at 19:43

    Is there any way exists to get this 60 days `page_access_token` by code in javascript? Like the way of getting `user_access_token` > `FB.getAuthResponse()['accessToken'];` Thanks! – Tulon Aug 4, 2020 at 21:14

▲ An approach that works in 2019

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I was recently trying to achieve something similar (to the use case described in this thread), but I wanted to make sure to respect Facebook's current policies, so I did a little research and here I'm sharing what I found.

My use case

So, as I said already, my use case is very similar to the one described here; that is:

- I'm doing some work for a school district.

- They are using a software tool to manage pretty much everything that relates to school transportation.

- That tool allows them to send email notifications (to subscribers) when they publish bus delay alerts and school closure alerts.

- A lot of people in the community follow the organization on their Facebook page, and that's the only place they look for those alerts.

- So an employee of the organization has to manually publish each notification on the Facebook page (in addition to creating it in the transportation software). Moreover, those notifications eventually expire (or are simply deleted before they expire), so the employee has to go back later on to delete them manually as well.

- It's a waist of time, so what we are trying to do here is to develop as simple system that periodically polls the software tool's database for new (and expired) notifications and update them (i.e. add and remove) on the Facebook page.

This is, in my view, a legitimate use case, but I wasn't sure how to implement it in a way that's in line with Facebook's policies.

The accepted answer

I followed the steps of the accepted answer and it worked, except that things appear to have changed: now, even though the generated page token does not expire, `access to data` does expire after around 60 days. You will see that as well if you follow the procedure and inspect the page token in the [FB Token Debugger Tool](#).

Besides, the fact that the generated page tokens are tied to the user account is also unfortunate, because if the user updates his/her password, then the page token also gets invalidated.

How to do it in 2019

After several hours of research, I stumbled upon the following Facebook documentation article: [Business Login for Direct Businesses](#).

It turns out that it is now possible, following the steps described in the above article, to generate a page token that is not associated to any particular Facebook user account and which will not expire (unless the FB App gets deleted or the underlying application token gets deleted, you know...)

So here are the steps and the most important parts:

- You need a [Business Manager](#) account.

  - Verification will be required and a digital contract will have to be signed.

- You need to add the target Facebook page to that account.

- You need to create a Facebook App, and transfer that app to the same Business Manager account as well.

- The app will have to go through Facebook's review process, because the following permissions will be needed: `manage_pages` and `publish_pages`.

  - **Important note** For the posts made using the generate page token to be visible to users other than the application administrators, that app will need to have been published and approved.

  - You may still experiment with the concept without submitting for review, but the posts won't be publicly visible.

- In the Business Manager account (only after your app and page have been added to the account), you need to create what's called a **System User**, and give that user admin role (or permissions) to the target Facebook page.

  - A system user is owned by the Business Manager account, and isn't tied to a specific user. My current understanding is that one major use case for a system user is programmatic access to Facebook's Graph API (just what we need).

- Then, for that system user, you need to generate a access token (which will be never-expiring). You will be prompted to select for which app. You will then select your target app.

- You will then need to use the generated app token to generate a page token, which will also be never-expiring. The procedure is described in this article as:

```
GET /<PAGE_ID>?fields=access_token&access_token=<SYSTEM_USER_ACCESS_TOKEN>
```

- That's it.

That token will never expire, and it won't be tied to a particular Facebook user, so it's exactly what we need!

The last part is to make sure that your Facebook app gets approved by Facebook. It's in fact the most important part, because the whole procedure is worthless if people don't see our posts.

I wanted to know for sure that I could rely on the above procedure to build something for my client without Facebook rejecting it in the end, so, beforehand (i.e. before starting to work on my client's project), I went through the whole process of creating a page, an app, a Business Manager account, etc. I verified my business. I submitted my app for review. In my request, I was very specific about my use case and emphasized that the app was for "self-use" (i.e. that the organization is developing an app for itself, not for other Facebook users). I got approved without less than 24 hours.

A few other notes about the app review process:

- I had to select a platform for the app, so I selected **website**.

- I had to indicate why the app needed the two permissions and how it was going to use them.

- I had to indicate why the reviewer would not be able to sign into my app and try it (i.e. because the app will be used by a worker process).

- For the mandatory screencasts, I simply presented manual operations in the terminal using the `curl` utility (to generate the page token and make posts to the Facebook page). I also showed how I was using Business Manager to link the system user to the page and generate a token, and so on.

- Again, I was very specific about my use case, and I think that that helped.

I hope this information will be useful to people with similar use cases.

Share Improve this answer Follow   edited Nov 17, 2019 at 16:37   answered Nov 15, 2019 at 13:39

33-B01

2,017   1   21   26

Wow. Thanks for the detailed write-up. I can't believe how insane the process is just to gain programmatic access to the API. 😖 – Simon E. Jan 13, 2023 at 11:57

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Many thanks to @redhotvengeance for step-by-step guide.

After some time, now there is clearly described in Facebook documentation:

https://developers.facebook.com/docs/facebook-login/access-tokens/expiration-and-extension

> Extending Page Access Tokens
>
> Apps can retrieve a page access token from Page admin users when they authenticate with the manage_pages permission. If the user access token used to retrieve this page access token is short-lived, the page access token will also be short-lived.
>
> To get a longer-lived page access token, exchange the User access token for a long-lived one, as above, and then request the Page access token. The resulting page access token will not have any expiry time.

Share Improve this answer Follow

answered Aug 25, 2017 at 19:34

Athlan
6,499 4 40 57

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You can also copy and past from the app dashboard on facebook. The steps:

1. Go to https://developers.facebook.com

2. Select your app in the top right corner of the page (pic of what it looks like)

3. Click on Messenger from the options on the left (it will go to setting automatically) (pic of what it looks like)

4. Go to the "Token Generation" section in the page. Select what page you want to generate the token for. (pic of what that section looks like)

5. The copy and past your page token where ever you need it.

Keep in mind that while in theory your token won't expire, that it is directly tied to what ever facebook account your logged into. So say you change your password or you remove the permissions from between your account and your app then your token won't be valid any more.

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answered Oct 27, 2017 at 16:40

Heidi
51 3

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I have figured out the current, easy way:

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1. **Get User Access Token:** First, you need a user access token with the necessary permissions to manage the page. You can get this user token via the Facebook Graph API Explorer

2. **Exchange for a Long-Lived User Access Token:** User access tokens are short-lived (an hour or so). You can exchange it for a long-lived token:

```
curl -i -X GET "https://graph.facebook.com/v18.0/oauth/access_token?
grant_type=fb_exchange_token&client_id={app-id}&client_secret={app-
secret}&fb_exchange_token={short-lived-token}"
```

3. **Get Page Access Token:** Once you have a user access token, you can get a page access token.

```
curl -i -X GET "https://graph.facebook.com/v18.0/{page-id}?
fields=access_token&access_token={user-access-token}"
```

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edited Jan 25 at 1:39   answered Jan 11 at 17:48

Jeremy Caney   head_dunce
7,438   90   53   80   **1**   2