

BYSTANDER PRIVACY: Evolving with the AI Glasses Landscape

Introduction

Protecting bystander privacy has always been a central tenet of building Meta wearable devices, in line with our [Responsible Innovation Principles](#). Since publishing our [white paper](#) in 2023 on bystander signaling for smart glasses, the technology landscape has continued to evolve rapidly with other companies launching new wearables and the ensuing AI boom.

Since our first generation Ray-Ban Stories glasses, a key feature has been the capture LED — a visible light that signals when a user takes a photo or video. With Ray-Ban Meta, our second generation of glasses, we made the LED even more visible: larger (2mm vs. 0.9mm) with a dynamic blinking pattern. We also built in tamper detection that disables capture if the LED is covered when a user is actively capturing photos or videos — building on our privacy-first approach.

AI Assistance

Today, the benefits of AI are being brought to everyday devices, from phones to glasses. People increasingly expect their devices to understand context, provide intelligent assistance, and seamlessly integrate into their daily routines.

New features continue to launch that are designed to leverage the power of AI to meet people's needs. AI glasses don't just capture traditional photos and videos — they help people engage with the world around them through real-time assistance from AI. Imagine someone traveling

in a foreign country asking “Hey Meta, will I get a ticket if I park here?” and getting an instant answer by having AI translate the parking sign. Or imagine someone who has a visual impairment asking their glasses to look where in a room they placed their keys. These capabilities rely on the camera to understand the visual environment, but in a fundamentally different way than traditional photography.

As AI capabilities expand, we must ensure our privacy approach evolves too — remaining as effective as possible for both users and bystanders in this new era of AI assistance.



Evolution: From Capture to Context

The camera in our AI glasses serves two distinct purposes:

- 1. Active Capture** enables you to take photos and videos that you want to save for later, such as to share with friends and family or to remember something you saw. So, if you're trying to snap a quick photo while out and about in the world, you can stay present without missing the moment. These images are saved for user access later — just like using a smartphone camera.
- 2. AI Features** use visual understanding to help AI answer questions about the world around you. So, if you're at the grocery store and trying to plan a meal, you can talk to Meta AI as you walk down the aisles to figure out a recipe based on what's in front of you.

The distinction between these two scenarios is important. When someone takes a photo of people in a restaurant, bystanders may want to know because the user may share it with others. This is different from someone asking their glasses to translate the menu in front of them, where the user's intent is to get assistance and not to save or share an image of what they're looking at.

2 Distinct Purposes



1 Active Capture

Photos/videos saved for later

2 AI Features

Use AI in the moment to better understand your current surroundings

Smarter Signaling

With greater use of the camera to support these AI features, we faced an important question: How do we continue to respect bystander privacy while allowing AI features to make sense of the world around you?

In summary, our solution: Maintaining LED signaling for the use cases that matter most to bystanders, and introducing privacy protections for AI features that don't leverage the LED signal.

Any type of signal can lose its value if people become conditioned to it over time. If the LED blinked for extended periods at a time (like whenever there was an AI interaction), people could stop noticing it — reducing the awareness of when photos or videos are being captured by users to have for later.

The capture LED will continue to let others know when you use your glasses for active capture, such as taking photos and recording videos for your gallery or streaming. When you use your glasses camera for AI features, we will take steps to protect people's privacy, like removing key identifiable information.

This approach balances a number of considerations in the current landscape:

- **The LED signals when it matters most:** Bystanders can trust that when they see the LED is on, users are actively capturing photos or videos for later.
- **AI assistance includes built-in privacy safeguards:** We take steps to protect people's privacy, like removing key identifiable information, for AI features that have the LED off.

Conclusion

This evolution — enhanced bystander protections while preserving meaningful capture signaling — reflects our commitment to ensuring everyone feels comfortable as wearable AI becomes part of daily life. Our core principle remains unchanged: respecting bystander privacy. The methods will evolve, but the commitment is constant.

Footnote: The capture LED will continue to signal for all camera use cases in the first generation of Ray-Ban Meta glasses (launched in 2023) due to the device architecture.