

To the Editor December 11, 2019

Delete your Facebook account

Updated January 13, and 23, 24, Feb. 2, 2020

Did you know that a small sample of a hundred plus items that Facebook alone collects about you includes, user income and net worth, user affiliations with credit unions, national banks or regional banks, your preferences in TV shows, users who are “heavy” buyers of beer, wine or spirits, users who are “receptive” to offers from companies offering online auto insurance, higher education or mortgages, and prepaid debit cards/satellite TV?

It is well documented in both books and legislative testimony that the British company Cambridge Analytical turned the military-grade psychological warfare techniques developed to deter ISIS recruitment, against the American voters. These were specifically targeted short lived Facebook ads used to change opinions and prey on the uninformed and naïve among us. Facebook has been unwilling to this point to share the content of these ads.

In addition Russian Facebook ads, based on Republican polling data individually targeted Facebook users and spread false narratives to create division among us.

Now for sure, Facebook will track your activities across the Internet even if you don't have a Facebook account. You will need to use web browser extensions like Privacy Badger, Ghostery, and HTTPS Everywhere to block this tracking.

Whatever perceived or real value comes from the use of this social network pales in comparison to the damage caused by fomenting division among us, and to never ever being able to have a free and fair election again in this country. It is now past the time to show your patriotism as an American, and delete your Facebook account, and then continue to protect yourself on the Internet.

1/4/20 Fresh Cambridge Analytica leak ‘shows global manipulation is out of control’

Company's work in 68 countries laid bare with release of more than 100,000 documents

An explosive leak of tens of thousands of documents from the defunct data firm Cambridge Analytica is set to expose the inner workings of the company that collapsed after the Observer revealed it had misappropriated 87 million Facebook profiles.

More than 100,000 documents relating to work in 68 countries that will lay bare the global infrastructure of an operation used to manipulate voters on “an industrial scale” is set to be released over the next months.

It comes as Christopher Steele, the ex-head of MI6's Russia desk and the intelligence expert behind the so-called “Steele dossier” into Trump's relationship with Russia, said that while the company had closed down, the failure to properly punish bad actors meant that the prospects for manipulation of the US election this year were even worse.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jan/04/cambridge-analytica-data-leak-global-election-manipulation>

Data on Hundreds of Millions of U.S. Facebook Users Exposed

Information could be deployed for spam or phishing attacks

Information on 267 million Facebook users, including user names, phone numbers and Facebook IDs, was exposed online, according to a cybersecurity researcher.

The data, mostly from U.S. Facebook users, was posted on a searchable database by a group that appeared to be based in Vietnam, said [Bob Diachenko](#), the cyber threat intelligence director at Security Discovery, a Ukrainian cybersecurity [website](#) that offers news and consulting services. The Vietnamese group appeared to be charging for access to the data, but a flaw in their code inadvertently left the database open to all, he said.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-12-20/data-on-hundreds-of-millions-of-u-s-facebook-users-exposed?srnd=technology-vp>

Facebook offers funny answer for why it tracks users' locations even when they turn tracking services off

Facebook offered a revealing explanation to lawmakers for why it continues to track users' locations even after those users turn Facebook's location tracking services off.

Responding to a letter from Sen. Josh Hawley, (R-MO), and Sen. Chris Coons, (D-DE), Facebook said it needs that extra location data to target ads, and for various security functions. The two senators asked Facebook last month to "respect" users' decisions to keep their locations private. Coons and Hawley now say that Facebook needs to give users more control over their data. I say, just go ahead and delete Facebook.

<https://boingboing.net/2019/12/18/facebook-offers-funny-answer-f.html>

1/13/20 Facebook Exec Says Company Helped Elect Trump And May Just Do It Again

Facebook Vice President Andrew Bosworth also said that the president's victory was not a result of outside influence but of clever digital advertising.

Bosworth later shared that the comments were "not meant for public consumption."

Bosworth's December remarks surfaced in reports Tuesday, a day after Trump claimed that Zuckerberg told the president during their dinner in October that he was "number 1" on the social media platform.

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/facebook-exec-company-helped-elect-trump-do-it-again_n_5e154bdcc5b6c7b859d28648

1/23/20

[A plea to save Democracy from a reporter](#)

1/24/20

Who's Afraid of the IRS? Not Facebook. (propublica.org)

In March 2008, as Facebook was speeding toward 100 million users and emerging as the next big tech company, it announced an important hire. Sheryl Sandberg was leaving Google to become Facebook's chief operating officer. CEO Mark Zuckerberg, then 23 years old, told The New York Times that Sandberg would take the young company "to the next level." Based on her time at Google, Sandberg soon decided that one area where Facebook was behind its peers was in its tax dodging. "My experience is that by not having a European center and running everything through the US, it is very costly in terms of taxes," she wrote other executives in an April 2008 email, which hasn't been previously reported. Facebook's head of tax agreed, replying that the company needed to find "a low taxed jurisdiction to park profits." Later that year, Facebook named Dublin as its international headquarters, just as Google had done when Sandberg was there. And just like Google, Facebook concocted an intra-company deal to "park profits" in Ireland, where it would pay a tax rate near zero.

Like its Big Tech peers, Facebook wasn't much afraid of the IRS. But, as it happened, the same year that Facebook started moving profits to Ireland, the IRS launched a team to crack down on deals like that. The effort started aggressively. As we recently reported, the IRS threw everything it had at Microsoft in the largest audit in the agency's history. But shortly after the IRS showed this new ambition, Republicans in Congress, after taking the House in 2010, began forcing cuts to the IRS' budget. Over the years, as Facebook grew into one of the world's largest companies, with 2 billion users, the IRS was shrinking. By the time the IRS finally took on Facebook over its Irish

deal a few years later, the agency was in over its head. ProPublica pieced together the story of the Facebook audit from court documents filed by the two sides in their years long battle. The picture revealed by the documents provides a crucial window into the IRS' struggles to check large corporations' tax schemes.

[Facebook To Pay \\$550 Million To Settle Facial Recognition Suit \(nbcnews.com\)](#)

Facebook has [agreed to pay \\$550 million to settle a class-action lawsuit](#) (*Warning: source may be pay walled; [alternative source](#)*) over its use of facial recognition technology in Illinois, "giving privacy groups a major victory that again raised questions about the social network's data-mining practices," reports The New York Times. From the report: *The case stemmed from Facebook's photo-labeling service, [Tag Suggestions](#), which uses face-matching software to suggest the names of people in users' photos. The suit said the Silicon Valley company [violated an Illinois biometric privacy law](#) by harvesting facial data for Tag Suggestions from the photos of millions of users in the state without their permission and without telling them how long the data would be kept. Facebook has said the allegations have no merit. Under the agreement, Facebook will pay \$550 million to eligible Illinois users and for the plaintiffs' legal fees.*

More reading and viewing:

Meet Brittany Kaiser, Cambridge Analytica Whistleblower Releasing Troves of New Files from Data Firm (six part series)

https://www.democracynow.org/2020/1/7/the_great_hack_cambridge_analytica

Zucked: Early Facebook Investor Roger McNamee on How the Company Became a Threat to Democracy (four part series)

https://www.democracynow.org/2019/10/23/roger_mcnamee_zucked_facebook_mark_zuckerberg

Roger McNamee singles out Facebook and Google for their roles in spreading disinformation.

<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/roger-mcnamee-on-climate-change-anti-vaxxing-white-supremacy-120859801.html>