



# Google & Facebook: Alliances with intelligence to make privacy obsolete

facebook

Google

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# Google Ties To CIA

- Robert David Steele - “Google took money from the CIA when it was poor and it was starting up.”
- In June 1999, the then up-start Google received a \$25 million round of equity funding led by Sequoia Capital and Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers, the latter of which the CIA’s In-Q-Tel had developed a close relationship with to advance priority technologies of value to the intelligence community.

# Google Ties To NSA

- 2008 - the NSA awarded Google a \$2 million contract. “NSA bought four Google search appliances, two-years replacement warranty on all of them, and 100 hours of consulting support.”
- Google is also providing the search features for a Wikipedia-style site, called Intellipedia, on which agents post information about their targets that can be accessed and appended by colleagues.
- 2010 - Google is teaming up with the National Security Agency to investigate the recent hack attack against its network in a bid to prevent another assault.

# Facebook Ties to CIA

- Facebook funds came indirectly from a corporation with strong CIA ties. It's a long chain of association: once Facebook begins to take off, venture capital firm ACCEL gives Facebook \$12.7 million. One of the 18 member investors of ACCEL, James Bryer, is also on the board of a venture capital firm called NVCA. Sitting on the board of NVCA with Bryer is Gilman Louie, who is on the board of In-Q-Tel.

# In-Q-Tel

- In-Q-TEL is a non-profit venture capital firm, a firm run by the CIA to invest in high-tech companies for the sole purpose of keeping the CIA equipped with the latest in information technology in support of United States intelligence capability.
- In-Q-TEL primarily invests in new Data Mining Technologies. Technologies that mine places like Myspace, and Facebook essentially give the CIA access to trends in various demographics as well as their thought patterns and behaviors.

# Changes to Privacy

- People more willing to share private information with friends and strangers indiscriminately
  - Current and previous employment
  - Friends, family, address, contact info
  - Hobbies, interests, political views & affiliations
  - Photos of everyone & everything
  - Relationship status, home town, education
  - Broadcasting private thoughts, current activities, current location

# Google Apps

- Picasa
  - Encourages people to share photos online
  - Tag photos online by participants using facial recognition. Teach Picasa and Google to better recognize faces, yours and your friends.
- Google Earth & Google Maps
  - GPS on smart phone to get directions, now Google knows where you are and where you're going



Legal and Practical Issues  
**UNDERCOVER OPERATIONS**

Why go undercover on Facebook, MySpace, etc?

- Communicate with suspects/targets
- Gain access to non-public info
- Map social relationships/networks

Undercover operations after *U.S. v. Drew*

- If agents violate terms of service, is that “otherwise illegal activity”?

Release  
EX. 5  
AWP



Legal and Practical Issues  
**WITNESSES & SOCIAL NETWORKS**

**Many witnesses have social-networking pages**

- Valuable source of info on defense witnesses
- Potential pitfalls for government witnesses

**Knowledge is power**

- Research all witnesses on social-networking sites
- Discovery obligations?

**Advise your witnesses:**

- Not to discuss cases on social-networking sites
- To think carefully about what they post



Computer Crime & Intellectual Property Section

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## Introduction to Social Networking **UTILITY IN CRIMINAL CASES**

**Evidence from social-networking sites can**

- **Reveal personal communications**
- **Establish motives and personal relationships**
- **Provide location information**
- **Prove and disprove alibis**
- **Establish crime or criminal enterprise**

**Also: instrumentalities or fruits of crime.**



Overview of Key Social Networking Sites  
**GETTING INFO FROM TWITTER**

**The good news**

- Most Twitter content is public
- Private messages kept until user deletes them

**The bad news**

- No contact phone number
- Only retain last login IP
- Will not preserve data without legal process
- Stated policy of producing data only in response to legal process (i.e., no 2702)
- No Law Enforcement Guide

# Social Media & The Government

- 2009 - Training course that describes how IRS employees may use various Internet tools – including social networking sites and Google Street View – to investigate taxpayers.
- The Justice Department released a presentation entitled "Obtaining and Using Evidence from Social Networking Sites." The slides detail several social media companies' data retention practices and responses to law enforcement requests. It notes that Facebook was "often cooperative with emergency requests" while complains about Twitter's short data retention policies and refusal to preserve data without legal process.

# Profiling

- NSA is funding research into the mass harvesting of social networks that could harness advances in internet technology - specifically the forthcoming "semantic web" championed by the web standards organization W3C - to combine data from social networking websites with details such as banking, retail and property records, allowing the NSA to build extensive, all-embracing personal profiles of individuals.

# Profiling Continued

- Spindex - Microsoft revealed Spindex, a Web service designed to aggregate its users' various social-networking feeds onto a single screen. The application is a product of Microsoft's FUSE Labs, a Microsoft division devoted to building software with a social connectivity focus.
- We're doing their work for them. We create pages all about ourselves and our friends and family. We describe what we do, what we like, who we are.

# Profiling Continued

- Police and Intelligence agencies used to have to leave their offices to gather information on people they were profiling.
- Now they just need to visit a few social media sites and connect the dots.
- Social media aggregators like Spindex will only make their jobs easier. It will connect the dots for them.

# Conclusion

- Ties between Google, Facebook and intelligence tenuous but real
- Huge amounts of personal (and private?) information at their disposal. Who is they? Who has access? How is it used?
- People have been trained to profile themselves
- Even if you aren't profiling yourself, your friends and family may be profiling you
- Is privacy impossible in today's world?

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