

# Creepy Patents Show Sociopath Facebook's Relentless Drive to Track Every Detail of Your Private Life



BY PHIL BAKER

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One of the best ways to gather intelligence on what a company is up to is to look at the patents they've applied for and have received. While some companies apply for patents for ideas they never use, or to block a competitor from using the idea, the patents provide a good indication of what's important to a company, because patents can cost many tens of thousands of dollars apiece for worldwide coverage.

Sahil Chinoy of the *New York Times* [looked](#) at some of the patents Facebook has applied for and the results he discovered are very creepy.

One of the patents describes the use of the forward-facing camera in your cell phone to figure out how you feel from your expressions while you're reading your Facebook feed. Apparently, clicking a "like" or "dislike" button is not good enough for them.

Another patent proposes listening to you and your surroundings using the microphone in your phone. The patent describes using the mic to listen to the TV show you're watching in the background, listen to what you're talking about, and track your sleeping patterns.

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According to the article, their review of hundreds of patent applications filed by Facebook "reveals that the company has considered tracking almost every aspect of its users' lives: where you are, who you spend time with, whether you're in a romantic relationship, which brands and politicians you're talking about. The company has even attempted to patent a method for predicting when your friends will die."

Facebook's response is that its patents should not be used to judge what its future products will be. They say that most of the technology cited in the patents will never be used.

But it does show their intense desire to capture every possible detail of what we do, how we look and what we're thinking. And Facebook is doing this in the face of heavy criticism that it's already collecting too much personal information.

What's striking about these revelations is they want to weaponize our phones to spy on us through the cameras and microphone.

Jason M. Schultz, a law professor at New York University, was quoted in the article. "A patent portfolio is a map of how a company thinks about where its technology is going," he said.

Here are some of the specific patents discussed in the *New York Times* article:

- Predicting whether you're in a romantic relationship by monitoring how often you visit another user's page and the number of friends you have of the opposite gender
- Using your posts to determine your personality traits, including emotional stability
- Detecting defective pixels or lens scratches on your camera to find a connection with someone else who might be using the same camera
- Detecting interference in the electrical power cable running to your TV to figure out what program is playing
- Detecting your phone's location in the middle of the night to capture your home address

Considering that Facebook has two billion active users, imagine the data they are amassing. If just a couple of these patents are put to practice, it dramatically increases the personal knowledge they will have about their subscribers. And from previous revelations, they are just as interested in learning personal details about those of us who don't use Facebook by gaining that information from our friends that are on Facebook.

## ***Shock: Facebook Is Tracking You Even If You're Not on ...***

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