
Think Facebook knows a lot about you? Google is WORSE!

From deleted files to location history, IT expert reveals the extent of the personal data the search giant holds on you

Dylan Curran downloaded all of the data stored on him by Facebook and Google. Google's data archive was almost ten times larger than scandal hit Facebook's. It dated back to 2008 and revealed a level of detail that shocked.

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Facebook has hit the headlines in recent weeks over its handling of your private data, and now the shocking extent of information held by Google has been revealed.

In a series of tweets, one IT expert has laid out exactly what the search giant knows about him, dating back to 2008, which he describes as 'preposterous'.

It ranges from every place he visited in the past year to every website he clicked on, and even contained files deleted from his Google Drive cloud storage account.

The news comes in the wake of the Cambridge Analytica scandal, which saw a Trump-affiliated firm obtaining data on 50 million unsuspecting Facebook users.

This information was used to target voters in the US, based on psychological profiling, with political adverts spreading disinformation.

Scroll down for video

Facebook has hit the headlines in recent weeks over its handling of your private data, with CEO Mark Zuckerberg (right) in the firing line. Now the shocking extent of information held by Google, headed by Sundar Pichai (left) has been revealed



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Facebook has hit the headlines in recent weeks over its handling of your private data, with CEO Mark Zuckerberg (right) in the firing line. Now the shocking extent of information held by Google, headed by Sundar Pichai (left) has been revealed

Web developer Dylan Curran, based in Waterford, Ireland, decided to download both his Facebook and Google archives on Saturday.

The data held by the world's most popular social media site was fairly large, at around 600mb, equivalent to roughly 400,000 Word documents.

But this paled in comparison to Google's data file, which was 5.5gb, almost ten times larger. This is around the same size as three million Word documents.

Sharing his findings on Twitter, in a post retweeted more than 150,000 times, he said: 'Want to freak yourself out? I'm gonna show just how much of your information the likes of Facebook and Google store about you without you even realising it.'

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Mr Curran found that Google was constantly tracking his location in the background, including how long it took to travel between various points.

It also held details about his hobbies and interests, as well as guesses on his possible weight and income.

Speaking to [NBC News](#), he said: 'It's wrong to trust any entity that big with so much information.

'They're just trying to make money,' and at some point, 'someone is going to make a mistake.'

Read on to find out exactly what Google knew, and how you can find out more about the specific types of data they have on you.

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Where you've been

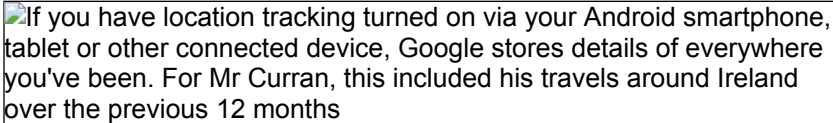
If you have location tracking turned on via your smartphone, tablet or other connected device and they're switched on, Google stores details of everywhere you've been.

For Mr Curran, this included his travels around Ireland over the previous 12 months, including journey times between towns and cities.

When MailOnline decided to drill down into this data, it revealed a surprising level of detail.

As well as foreign travel, it included the name of a number of pubs visited, the length of time spent in them, and the route taken to get home.

To find out what data Google stores on your travels, click [here](#).

If you have location tracking turned on via your Android smartphone, tablet or other connected device, Google stores details of everywhere you've been. For Mr Curran, this included his travels around Ireland over the previous 12 months



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WHAT DOES YOUR DATA FILE HOLD? GOOGLE VS FACEBOOK

Google

Every search made - even if it's been cleared from your browser or device history

Every event in your Google calendar - including whether you attended

Every location you have visited - including how long it took you to get there, how long you stayed and left

Every image and file you have downloaded

Every file you've ever uploaded to Google Drive - even if they've been deleted

Every Google Fit workout you've done

Every photo you have taken - including metadata on where and when it was shot

Every ad you've ever viewed or clicked on

Every marketing topic that might interest you - based on factors like your age, gender, location and web

Every app you've ever searched for, installed or launched

Every YouTube video you've ever searched for or watched

Every email you ever sent or received - including deleted messages and spam



Events you've attended


Google's data files contain a complete record of your Google Calendar.

This is broken down into all the events you've ever added, whether you actually attended them, based on your location, and what time you attended.

Mr Curran shared a section that shows him going for an interview for a job in marketing, including the time he arrived.

To access your Calendar history, as well as your complete Google data file, you need to request your Google Takeout file by clicking [here](#).

Be aware that, if your file is anything like Mr Curran's, this may take a long time to download.

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WHAT IS THE CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA SCANDAL?

Communications firms Cambridge Analytica has offices in London, New York, Washington, as well as Brazil and Malaysia.

The company boasts it can 'find your voters and move them to action' through data-driven campaigns and a team that includes data scientists and behavioural psychologists.

'Within the United States alone, we have played a pivotal role in winning presidential races as well as congressional and state elections,' with data on more than 230 million American voters, Cambridge Analytica claims on its website.

The company profited from a feature that meant apps could ask for permission to access your own data as well as the data of all your Facebook friends.

 The data firm suspended its chief executive, Alexander Nix (pictured), after recordings emerged of him making a series of controversial claims, including boasts that Cambridge Analytica had a pivotal role in the election of Donald Trump



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This meant the company was able to mine the information of 55 million Facebook users even though just 270,000 people gave them permission to do so.

This was designed to help them create software that can predict and influence voters' choices at the ballot box.

The data firm suspended its chief executive, Alexander Nix, after recordings emerged of him making a series of controversial claims, including boasts that Cambridge Analytica had a pivotal role in the election of Donald Trump.

This information is said to have been used to help the Brexit campaign in the UK.



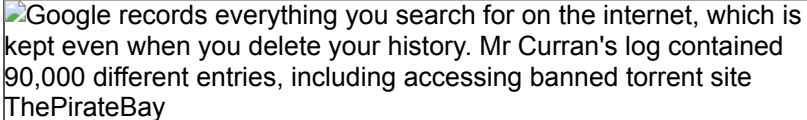
Everything you've ever searched for

Google, somewhat unsurprisingly for a search engine, records everything you search for on the internet.

What might shock you, however, is that this is kept on file even when you delete your history.

Mr Curran's log contained 90,000 different entries, even showing images he downloaded and websites he accessed.

This included banned torrent site ThePirateBay, which he mentions in his tweets to illustrate how much damage this information could do if it becomes public.

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Google stores search history across all your devices on a separate database.

That means, even if you delete your search history and phone history, the search giant still has your entire history.

To delete it permanently, you have to manually access the My Activity log [here](#) and delete everything.


This will need to be done for all devices individually.

Ad topics that might interest you

Google builds a marketing profile on you, based on a number of factors.

These include details like your location, gender and age.

It also includes your hobbies and both your personal and professional interests, as revealed through your searches and web activity.

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In the case of Mr Curran, this also included guesses about his relationship status, weight and income.


When MailOnline checked this, we found a range of interests, some of which seem to have been logged by a single search or website interaction alone.

To access your ad profile, click [here](#).

Information you deleted and emails you sent

The Google Takeout file also includes a record of all of the information you've uploaded to your Google Drive account.

In Mr Curran's, he found files he had already deleted, including past resumes and monthly budgets.

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He also found all the computer coding files and websites he'd ever made, as well as his PGP private encryption key, which had been deleted, used to protect his e-mails.

Every e-mail Mr Curran ever sent or received, including deleted and spam messages, was also recorded.

To find out what files Google has from your Drive account and email, download your Takeout file [here](#).


The apps you've used

Google holds information on all the apps and browser extensions you use.

This includes how often you use them, where you use them, and who you interact with through them.

This can include details like who you talk to on Facebook, what countries they are in and even when you go to sleep.

To find out what information Google has on the apps you use, click [here](#).

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Your YouTube history

Google knows all of your YouTube browsing history.

This can reveal a multitude of personal details about you, ranging from your political and religious beliefs, to mental and physical health issues.

In Mr Curran's case, it revealed every YouTube video he'd ever searched for or viewed, since 2008.

To check your YouTube history file, click [here](#).

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When you worked out

If you use Google Fit, the firm also keeps records on every time you workout.

In Mr Curran's case, this included all the steps he'd ever taken, every time he'd walked anywhere, as well as running and cycling.

It also included all the times he'd recorded meditation and yoga sessions.

Mr Curran has since deleted this information and revoked Google Fit's permissions.

If you use Google Fit, download your Takeout file to access your records [here](#).

If you use Google Fit, the firm also keeps records on every time you workout or meditate. In Mr Curran's case, this included all the steps he'd ever taken, every time he'd walked anywhere, as well as running and cycling



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WHAT HAS FACEBOOK DONE TO ADDRESS PRIVACY CONCERNS?

Facebook is giving its privacy tools a makeover as it reels from criticisms over its data practices and faces tighter European regulations in the coming months.

The changes won't affect Facebook's privacy policies or the types of data it gathers about its users.

But the company hopes its 2.2 billion users will have an easier time navigating its complex and often confusing privacy and security settings.

Facebook is giving its privacy tools a makeover as

Facebook is giving its privacy tools a makeover as it reels from criticisms over its data practices and faces tighter European regulations in the coming months. This image shows how the settings will appear before (left) and after (right) the redesign

Facebook says it's trying to make the controls easier to find and to give users a simpler way to access and download the data it collects on them.

The announcement follows revelations that Trump-affiliated consulting firm got data on millions of unsuspecting Facebook users.

Facebook is also facing criticism for collecting years of data on call and text histories from Android users.

In a written statement, Erin Egan, vice president and chief privacy officer, policy, and Ashlie Beringer, vice president and deputy general counsel, said: 'Last week showed how much more work we need to do to enforce our policies and help people understand how Facebook works and the choices they have over their data.'

This image shows a redesign of Facebook's privacy

This image shows a redesign of Facebook's privacy tools. The changes won't affect Facebook's privacy policies or the types of data it gathers on users, but the company hopes users will have an easier time navigating its complex settings menus



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'We've heard loud and clear that privacy settings and other important tools are too hard to find and that we must do more to keep people informed.'

'We're taking additional steps in the coming weeks to put people more in control of their privacy.'

'Most of these updates have been in the works for some time, but the events of the past several days underscore their importance.'

Among the changes, Facebook is making data settings and tools easier to find, is introducing a new privacy shortcuts menu, and is adding tools to find, download and delete your Facebook data.



All of the photos you've ever taken or searched for

Mr Curran's Takeout file includes details of all of the photos he's ever taken with his phone.

This was broken down by year and includes metadata on when and where he captured the images.

It also included every picture he'd ever searched for or saved.

This included every location he's ever searched for or clicked on, every news article he's ever searched for or read, and every google search he'd made since 2009.

To check your image history, download your Takeout file [here](#).

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HOW CAN YOU STOP FACEBOOK'S ADVERTISING NETWORK TRACKING YOU ONLINE?

Part of what makes companies like Facebook and Google so valuable, is that they oversee vast treasure troves of user data which can be of huge benefit to brands.

For advertisers, it means they're more likely to get a higher click-through rate on their advertisements, boosting the effectiveness of their campaigns.

For users, it means forfeiting personal information to a variety of unknown sources.

Thankfully, there are a number of steps that can be taken to prevent Facebook's ad partners from following you as you browse the internet on your phone or desktop computer.

Changing your settings on your smartphone or tablet

If you own an iPhone or iPad, the steps to block targeted adverts are relatively simple.

Go to Settings, tap Privacy and then scroll down to click on Advertising.

From there, swipe the 'Limit Ad Tracking' button.

If you choose to leave the 'Limit Ad Tracking' feature off, that means that advertisers can track your browsing behavior by assigning your device a unique ID number, or a Identifier For Advertising.

In turn, it will be harder for ad technology companies to track your browsing behavior.

If you own an Android phone or tablet, the process is very similar.

Open up Settings, navigate to Accounts and Sync, select Google, then Ads and finally, select 'Opt Out of Interest Based Ads.'

Changing your browser settings

If you're browsing the internet on Google Chrome, go to 'Settings' in the right-hand dropdown menu.

From there, click on 'Show advanced settings,' then select Privacy.

Finally, click on 'Send a do not track request with your browsing traffic.'

A popup on Chrome further explains what this means: 'Enabling Do Not Track means that a request will be included with your browsing traffic.'

'Any effect depends on whether a website responds to the request, and how the request is interpreted.'

'For example, some websites may respond to this request by showing you ads that aren't based on other websites you've visited.'

'Many websites will still collect and use your browsing data-- for example, to improve security, to provide content, services, ads, and recommendations on their websites, and to generate reporting statistics.'

What this means is that not all websites necessarily have to honor 'Do Not Track' requests.

Contacting your local data privacy alliance

Google, Facebook and Twitter are just a few of the major corporations that are part of a number of privacy alliances that have agreed to honor requests to stop tracking.

These are the Digital Advertising Alliance in the US, the Digital Advertising Alliance of Canada and the European Interactive Digital Advertising Alliance.

The websites of each of these organizations contain instructions on how to add your details to their 'do not track' schemes.

Change your tacking settings in Facebook

Facebook has given users of its social network the option to opt out of ad tracking via the site.

First, log in to Facebook, go to Settings, then click on 'Ads' in the menu on the left-hand side of the screen.

Under Ad Settings, click on the button that says 'Ads on apps and websites off of the Facebook Companies.'

Then scroll down to the bottom and select 'No.'

Facebook says that if you select that option, it means that you'll still see ads, but 'they won't be as relevant to you.'

Additionally, you may still see ads related to your age, gender or location.

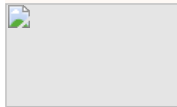
Will MySpace ever lose its monopoly?

Victor Keegan



Aristotle distinguished between friendships based on communal interests and those of soulmates who bonded out of mutual affection. The vast majority of people signed up for MySpace, Rupert Murdoch's phenomenally successful networking site, fall into the former category. But on present showing that won't stop its continuing expansion which, as the MySpace generation goes into employment, could eventually extend Murdoch's influence in ways that would make his grip on satellite television seem parochial.

It was said at the time of purchase that if Murdoch tried to mess with MySpace's "sharing" culture by commercialising it, punters would simply switch to one of the dozens of clones it has spawned from Bebo.com to the upwardly mobile Cyworld.com, which has taken South Korea by storm and is now taking the battle into MySpace's backyard in the US. Cyworld points to research showing that MySpace is a "rites-of-passage" site that kids will grow out of while Cyworld is a "real you" experience. It is an interesting, almost Aristotelian, distinction but some argue it may already be too late for competitors to dislodge MySpace, except in niche markets.



John Barrett of TechNewsWorld claims that MySpace is well on the way to becoming what economists call a "natural monopoly". Users have invested so much social capital in putting up data about themselves it is not worth their changing sites, especially since every new user that MySpace attracts adds to its value as a network of interacting people.

It is common knowledge that a fax machine is worthless until others have one too. That is what is happening in social networking except that, unlike a fax machine, it can't be instantly swapped for another. It is easy to change search engines, even if it is Google. But if you change social networks you not only have to move all your videos, audios, messages, photos elsewhere but you also lose your network of friends unless they migrate with you. MySpace won't make that easy. Its massive user base will help maintain its dominance, according to co-founder Chris DeWolfe. "In social networking, there is a huge advantage to have scale. You can find almost anyone on MySpace and the more time that has been invested in the site, the more locked in people are".

If it were a country, MySpace would be the seventh biggest, ahead of Russia and Bangladesh, though not all users are active. It had 153,339,321 users when I started writing this article and 153,523,640 when I had finished. What does this growth bode for the future? For the first time a like-minded media generation will grow up interacting instantaneously: globalisation personified. Maybe we won't need CVs any more as our lives will be there online.

But will commercialisation kill the culture that spawned MySpace? The \$900m (£450m) three-year deal Google did to put its adverts on MySpace is, reportedly,

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Briefing: news for the
news-makers

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being renegotiated. Upwards. When I visited the site this week I was met by offputting flashing adverts. Logging on I was then greeted with a loud video advert there was no obvious way of turning off. Good job I was not in a library.

That doesn't bother MySpacers and they don't seem bothered by other matters. User-generated content, for instance. MySpace is a huge generator of it, maybe the biggest, but users don't get paid. But why not? Google, the owner of YouTube, the vast site that hosts video clips, is under siege from corporations, doubtless including Murdoch's Fox empire, to get royalty income from those clips. Yet MySpace creams off all the advertising income associated with user content without which MySpace's goldmine would vaporise. The difference is that YouTube's predators are large corporations, whereas consumer power is diffused among over 150m individuals on MySpace. Maybe they should form a virtual trade union. (FROM 2007)

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-5557619/IT-expert-reveals-extent-data-Google-you.html#ixzz5B9e0Of7H>

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