

Are you ready? This is all the data Facebook and Google have on you | Dylan Curran

Dylan Curran

Want to freak yourself out? I'm going to show just how much of your information the likes of [Facebook](#) and Google store about you without you even realising it.

Google knows where you've been

Google stores your location (if you have location tracking turned on) every time you turn on your phone. You can see a timeline of where you've been from the very first day you started using [Google](#) on your phone.

Click on this link to see your own data: [google.com/maps/timeline?...](https://www.google.com/maps/timeline?)

Here is every place I have been in the last 12 months in Ireland. You can see the time of day that I was in the location and how long it took me to get to that location from my previous one.

Google knows everything you've ever searched – and deleted

Google stores search history across all your devices. That can mean that, even if you delete your search history and phone history on one device, it may still have data saved from other devices.

Click on this link to see your own data: myactivity.google.com/myactivity

Google has an advertisement profile of you

Google creates an advertisement profile based on your information, including your location, gender, age, hobbies, career, interests, relationship status, possible weight (need to lose 10lb in one day?) and income.

Click on this link to see your own data: [google.com/settings/ads/](https://www.google.com/settings/ads/)

Google knows all the apps you use

Google stores information on every app and extension you use. They know how often you use them, where you use them, and who you use them to interact with. That means they know who you talk to on Facebook, what countries are you speaking with, what time you go to sleep.

Click on this link to see your own data: [security.google.com/settings/secure...](https://security.google.com/settings/secure)

Google has all of your YouTube history

Google stores *all* of your YouTube history, so they probably know whether you're going to be a parent soon, if you're a conservative, if you're a progressive, if you're Jewish, Christian, or Muslim, if you're feeling depressed or suicidal, if you're anorexic ...

Click on this link to see your own data: youtube.com/feed/history/s...

The data Google has on you can fill millions of Word documents

Google offers an option to download all of the data it stores about you. I've requested to download it and the file is 5.5GB *big*, which is roughly 3m Word documents.

This link includes your bookmarks, emails, contacts, your Google Drive files, all of the above information, your YouTube videos, the photos you've taken on your phone, the businesses you've bought from, the products you've bought through Google ...

They also have data from your calendar, your Google hangout sessions, your location history, the music you listen to, the Google books you've purchased, the Google groups you're in, the websites you've created, the phones you've owned, the pages you've shared, how many steps you walk in a day ...

Click on this link to see your own data: google.com/takeout

Facebook has reams and reams of data on you, too

Facebook offers a similar option to download all your information. Mine was roughly 600MB, which is roughly 400,000 Word documents.

This includes every message you've ever sent or been sent, every file you've ever sent or been sent, all the contacts in your phone, and all the audio messages you've ever sent or been sent.

Click here to see your data: <https://www.facebook.com/help/131112897028467>

Facebook stores everything from your stickers to your login location

Facebook also stores what it thinks you might be interested in based off the things you've liked and what you and your friends talk about (I apparently like the topic "girl").

Somewhat pointlessly, they also store all the stickers you've ever sent on Facebook (I have no idea why they do this. It's just a joke at this stage).

They also store every time you log in to Facebook, where you logged in from, what time, and from what device.

And they store all the applications you've ever had connected to your Facebook account, so they can guess I'm interested in politics and web and graphic design, that I was single between X and Y period with the installation of Tinder, and I got a HTC phone in November.

(Side note, if you have Windows 10 installed, this is a picture of *just* the privacy options with 16 different sub-menus, which have all of the options enabled by default when you install Windows 10)

They can access your webcam and microphone

The data they collect includes tracking where you are, what applications you have installed, when you use them, what you use them for, access to your webcam and microphone at any time, your contacts, your emails, your calendar, your call history, the messages you send and receive, the files you download, the games you play, your photos and videos, your music, your search history, your browsing history, even what radio stations you listen to.

Here are some of the different ways Google gets your data

I got the Google Takeout document with all my information, and this is a breakdown of all the different ways they get your information.

Here's the search history document, which has 90,000 different entries, even showing the images I downloaded and the websites I accessed (I showed the Pirate Bay section to show how much damage this information can do).

Google knows which events you attended, and when

Here's my Google Calendar broken down, showing all the events I've ever added, whether I actually attended them, and what time I attended them at (this part is when I went for an interview for a marketing job, and what time I arrived).

And Google has information you deleted

This is my Google Drive, which includes files I *explicitly* deleted including my résumé, my monthly budget, and all the code, files and websites I've ever made, and even my PGP private key, which I deleted, that I use to encrypt emails.

Google can know your workout routine

This is my Google Fit, which shows all of the steps I've ever taken, any time I walked anywhere, and all the times I've recorded any meditation/yoga/workouts I've done (I deleted this information and revoked Google Fit's permissions).

And they have years' worth of photos

This is all the photos ever taken with my phone, broken down by year, and includes metadata of when and where I took the photos

Google has every email you ever sent

Every email I've ever sent, that's been sent to me, including the ones I deleted or were categorised as spam.

And there is more

I'll just do a short summary of what's in the thousands of files I received under my Google Activity.

First, every Google Ad I've ever viewed or clicked on, every app I've ever launched or used and when I did it, every website I've ever visited and what time I did it at, and every app I've ever installed or searched for.

They also have every image I've ever searched for and saved, every location I've ever searched for or clicked on, every news article I've ever searched for or read, and *every single Google search* I've made since 2009. And then finally, every YouTube video I've ever searched for or viewed, since 2008.

This information has millions of nefarious uses. You say you're not a terrorist. Then how come you were googling Isis? Work at Google and you're suspicious of your wife? Perfect, just look up her location and search history for the last 10 years. Manage to gain access to someone's Google account? Perfect, you have a chronological diary of everything that person has done for the last 10 years.

This is one of the craziest things about the modern age. We would never let the government or a corporation put cameras/microphones in our homes or location trackers on us. But we just went ahead and did it ourselves because – to hell with it! – I want to watch cute dog videos.

- A caption was corrected on 28 March 2018 to replace “privacy options in Facebook” with “privacy options in Windows 10”.
- *Dylan Curran is a data consultant and web developer, who does extensive research into spreading technical awareness and improving digital etiquette*
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