

Facebook Spies On Private Messages Of Americans

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Facebook spied on private messages of Americans

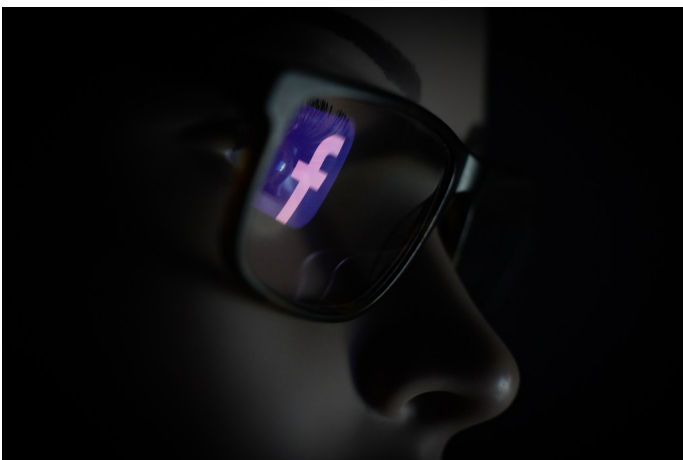
By [Miranda Devine](#)



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Facebook has been spying on the private messages and data of American users and [reporting them to the FBI](#) if they express anti-government or anti-authority sentiments — or question [the 2020 election](#) — according to sources within the Department of Justice. Under the FBI collaboration operation, somebody at Facebook red-flagged these supposedly subversive private messages over the past 19 months and transmitted them in redacted form to the domestic terrorism operational unit at FBI headquarters in Washington, DC, without a subpoena. "It was done outside the legal process and without probable cause," alleged one of the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "Facebook provides the FBI with private conversations which are protected by the First Amendment without any subpoena." These private messages then have been farmed out as "leads" to FBI field offices around the country, which subsequently requested subpoenas from the partner US Attorney's Office in their district to officially obtain the private conversations that Facebook already had shown them. But when the targeted Facebook users were investigated by agents in a local FBI field office, sometimes using covert surveillance techniques, nothing criminal or violent turned up. Facebook spied on the private messages of Americans who questioned the 2020 election, DOJ sources said. NurPhoto via Getty Images



Under the FBI collaboration operation, someone at Facebook red-flagged supposedly subversive private messages over the past 19 months. NurPhoto via Getty Images

"It was a waste of our time," said one source familiar with subpoena requests lodged during a 19-month frenzy by FBI headquarters in Washington, DC, to produce the caseload to match the Biden administration's rhetoric on domestic terrorism after the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol riot.

'Red-blooded Americans'

The Facebook users whose private communications Facebook had red-flagged as domestic terrorism for the FBI were all "conservative right-wing individuals."

"They were gun-toting, red-blooded Americans [who were] angry after the election and shooting off their mouths and talking about staging protests. There was nothing criminal, nothing about violence or massacring or assassinating anyone.

"As soon as a subpoena was requested, within an hour, Facebook sent back gigabytes of data and photos. It was ready to go. They were just waiting for that legal process so they could send it."

Facebook denied the allegations yesterday.

In two contrasting statements sent one hour apart, Erica Sackin, a spokesperson at Facebook's parent company, Meta, claimed Facebook's interactions with the FBI were designed to "protect people from harm."

In her first statement, she said: "These claims are false because they reflect a misunderstanding of how our systems protect people from harm and how we engage with law enforcement. We carefully scrutinize all government requests for user information to make sure they're legally valid and narrowly tailored and we often push back. We respond to legal requests for information in accordance with applicable law and our terms and we provide notice to users whenever permitted."

In a second, unprompted "updated statement," sent 64 minutes later, Sackin altered her language to say the claims are "wrong," not "false."

"These claims are just wrong. The suggestion we seek out peoples' private messages for anti-government language or questions about the validity of past elections and then proactively supply those to the FBI is plainly inaccurate and there is zero evidence to support it," said Sackin, a DC-based crisis response expert who previously worked for Planned Parenthood and "Obama for America" and now leads Facebook's communications on "counterterrorism and dangerous organizations and individuals."



"Google, Facebook and Twitter, these companies are globalist," a whistleblower says.
AP

Agency doublespeak

In a statement Wednesday, the FBI neither confirmed nor denied allegations put to it about its joint operation with Facebook, which is designated as "unclassified/law enforcement sensitive."

Responding to questions about the misuse of data only of American users, the statement curiously focused on "foreign malign influence actors" but did acknowledge that the nature of the FBI's relationship with social media providers enables a "quick exchange" of information, and is an "ongoing dialogue."

see also



editorial

Fauci's direct line to Zuck proves Facebook COVID censorship was all about power, not public health

"The FBI maintains relationships with U.S. private sector entities, including social media providers. The FBI has provided companies with foreign threat indicators to help them protect their platforms and customers from abuse by foreign malign influence actors. U.S. companies have also referred information to the FBI with investigative value relating to foreign malign influence. The FBI works closely with interagency partners, as well as state and local partners, to ensure we're sharing information as it becomes available. This can include threat information, actionable leads, or indicators. The FBI has also established relationships with a variety of social media and technology companies and maintains an ongoing dialogue to enable a quick exchange of threat information."

Facebook's denial that it proactively provides the FBI with private user data without a subpoena or search warrant, if true, would indicate that the initial transfer has been done by a person (or persons) at the company designated as a "confidential human source" by the FBI someone with the authority to access and search users' private messages.

In this way, Facebook would have "plausible deniability" if questions arose about misuse of users' data and its employee's confidentiality would be protected by the FBI.

"They had access to searching and they were able to pinpoint it, to identify these conversations from millions of conversations," according to one of the DOJ sources.

'None were Antifa types'

Before any subpoena was sought, "that information had already been provided to [FBI] headquarters. The lead already contained specifics of the information inside the [users' private] messages. Some of it was redacted but most of it was not. They basically had a portion of the conversation and then would skip past the next portion, so it was the most egregious parts highlighted and taken out of context."

"But when you read the full conversation in context [after issuing the subpoena] it didn't sound as bad ... There was no plan or orchestration to carry out any kind of violence."

Some of the targeted Americans had posted photos of themselves "shooting guns together and bitching about what's happened [after the 2020 election]. A few were members of a militia but that was protected by the Second Amendment ...

"They [Facebook and the FBI] were looking for conservative right-wing individuals. None were Antifa types."



Mark Zuckerberg previously said he regretted suppressing stories about the 2020 election.
Xinhua News Agency/Getty Images

One private conversation targeted for investigation "spun up into multiple cases because there were multiple individuals in all these different chats."

The DOJ sources have decided to speak to The Post, and risk their careers, because they are concerned that federal law enforcement has been politicized and is abusing the constitutional rights of innocent Americans.

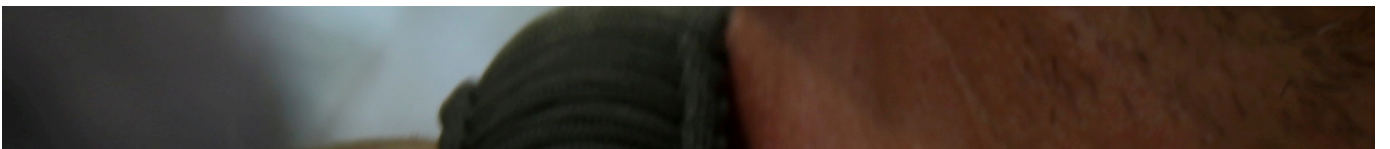
They say more whistleblowers are ready to join them.

Unrest has been building among the rank and file across the FBI and in some parts of the DOJ for months. It came to a head after the raid last month on former President Donald Trump's [Mar-a-Lago](#) home in Florida.

"The most frightening thing is the combined power of Big Tech colluding with the enforcement arm of the FBI," says one whistleblower. "Google, Facebook and [Twitter](#), these companies are globalist. They don't have our national interest at heart."

Facebook and tech giants to target attacker manifestos, far-right militias in database

By [Elizabeth Cullford](#)









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A militia member with body armor and a Three Percenters militia patch stands in Stone Mountain as various militia groups stage rallies at Stone Mountain, Georgia, U.S. August 15, 2020. REUTERS/Dustin Chambers/File Photo

A counterterrorism organization formed by some of the biggest U.S. tech companies including Facebook ([FB.O](#)) and Microsoft ([MSFT.O](#)) is significantly expanding the types of extremist content shared between firms in a key database, aiming to crack down on material from white supremacists and far-right militias, the group told Reuters.

Until now, the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism's (GIFCT) database has focused on videos and images from terrorist groups on a United Nations list and so has largely consisted of content from Islamist extremist organizations such as Islamic State, al Qaeda and the Taliban.

Over the next few months, the group will add attacker manifestos - often shared by sympathizers after white supremacist violence - and other publications and links flagged by U.N. initiative Tech Against Terrorism. It will use lists from intelligence-sharing group Five Eyes, adding URLs and PDFs from more groups, including the Proud Boys, the Three Percenters and neo-Nazis.

The firms, which include Twitter ([TWTR.N](#)) and Alphabet Inc's ([GOOGL.O](#)) YouTube, share "hashes," unique numerical representations of original pieces of content that have been removed from their services. Other platforms use these to identify the same content on their own sites in order to review or remove it.

While the project reduces the amount of extremist content on mainstream platforms, groups can still post violent images and rhetoric on many other sites and parts of the internet.

The tech group wants to combat a wider range of threats, said GIFCT's Executive Director Nicholas Rasmussen in an interview with Reuters.

"Anyone looking at the terrorism or extremism landscape has to appreciate that there are other parts... that are demanding attention right now," Rasmussen said, citing the threats of far-right or racially motivated violent extremism.

The tech platforms have long been criticized for failing to police violent extremist content, though they also face concerns over censorship. The issue of domestic extremism, including white supremacy and militia groups, took on [renewed urgency](#) following the deadly Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol.

Fourteen companies can access the GIFCT database, including Reddit, Snapchat-owner Snap ([SNAP.N](#)), Facebook-owned Instagram, Verizon ([VZ.N](#)) Media, Microsoft's LinkedIn and file-sharing service Dropbox ([DBX.O](#)).

GIFCT, which is now an independent organization, was created in 2017 under pressure from U.S. and European governments after a series of deadly attacks in Paris and Brussels. Its database mostly contains digital fingerprints of videos and images related to groups on the U.N. Security Council's consolidated sanctions list and a few specific live-streamed attacks, such as the 2019 mosque shootings in Christchurch, New Zealand.

GIFCT has faced criticism and concerns from some human and digital rights groups over centralized or over-broad censorship.

"Over-achievement in this takes you in the direction of violating someone's rights on the internet to engage in free expression," said Rasmussen.

Emma Llanso, director of Free Expression at the Center for Democracy & Technology, said in a statement: "This expansion of the GIFCT hash database only intensifies the need for GIFCT to improve the transparency and accountability of these content-blocking resources."

"As the database expands, the risks of mistaken takedown only increase," she added.

The group wants to continue to broaden its database to include hashes of audio files or certain symbols and grow its membership. It recently added home-rental giant Airbnb ([ABNB.O](#)) and email marketing company Mailchimp as members.