

US Homeland Security (DHS) May Soon Vet Social Media Accounts Before Granting US Travel Visas

By [Lauren McCauley](#)

Global Research, July 02, 2016

[MintPress News](#) 30 June 2016

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#), [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

File this under Another Unsettling Development: People who want to travel to the United States may soon have their Facebook profiles and other social media accounts “vetted” by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) before entering.

A proposed change to the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) and to Form I-94W [posted](#) to the government’s Federal Register last week suggests adding the following question: “Please enter information associated with your online presence—Provider/Platform—Social media identifier.”

These forms are filled out by all international travelers who wish to travel to the U.S. under the Visa Waiver Program.

The report states that this would be an “optional data field to request social media identifiers to be used for vetting purposes, as well as applicant contact information.”

“Collecting social media data will enhance the existing investigative process and provide DHS greater clarity and visibility to possible nefarious activity and connections by providing an additional tool set which analysts and investigators may use to better analyze and investigate the case,” the department further notes.

As *Fusion* reporter Kashmir Hill [wrote](#), this overly broad request raises many questions for travelers.

“As phrased that could include your Twitter handle, the url for your Facebook page, your OkCupid or Grindr handle, your Instagram account, your Tumblr, your Vine account, your Snapchat, your Reddit account, your Pinterest page, your Pornhub account, and any random messaging forums in which you take part,” Hill said. “Where does it end? Must you include an account if it’s private?”

Joseph Lorenzo Hall, chief technologist with The Center for Democracy & Technology, who first [drew attention](#) to the change, [told](#) the *BBC* that he hopes that U.S. government “rethinks” the proposal.

“Democracy in general requires having spaces free from government scrutiny and increasingly social life happens online,” Hall said. “We would have a poor society if people were chilled from participating in social activity online so I really hope they rethink this.”

For what it’s worth, the government is [accepting comment](#) on this proposal for the next 59 days.

The original source of this article is [MintPress News](#)
Copyright © [Lauren McCauley](#), [MintPress News](#), 2016

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Lauren
McCauley](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca
www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca