



How To Find Out What Facebook Knows About You

A Step-By-Step Guide



How To Find Out What Facebook Knows About You

(Spoiler Alert: AAAAAAAAH!)

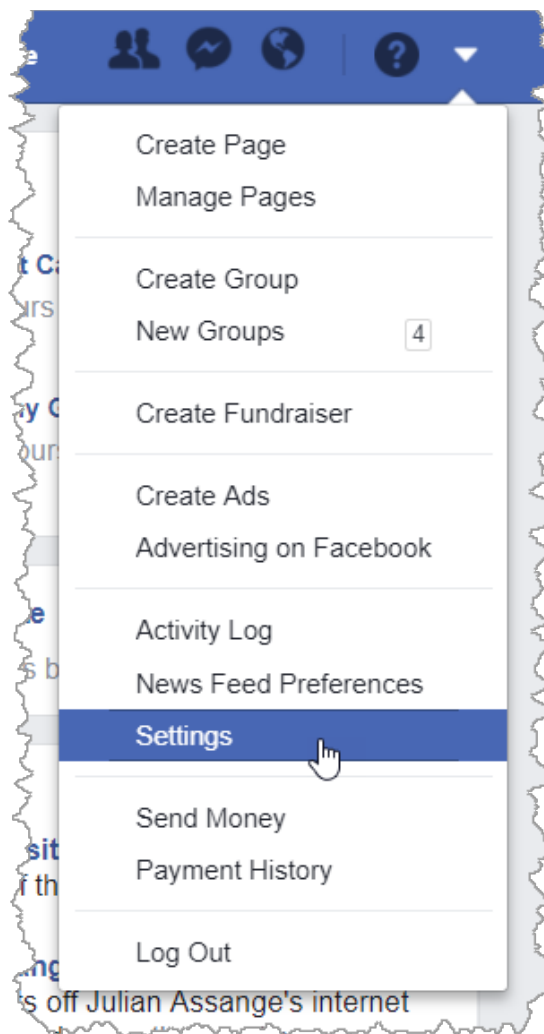
So, after I wrote the last PDF called “How To Stop (Some) Facebook Data Leaks” – I got to thinking about all the data that Facebook must store on me – and I wondered how far back it went.

So, I decided to download ALL the data that Facebook collected and IS STORING on me.

Whoa. What an eye-opener!

I’ll share some of my findings below (as redacted as a White House Briefing!) – but for now, let’s get to the HOW you download your data.

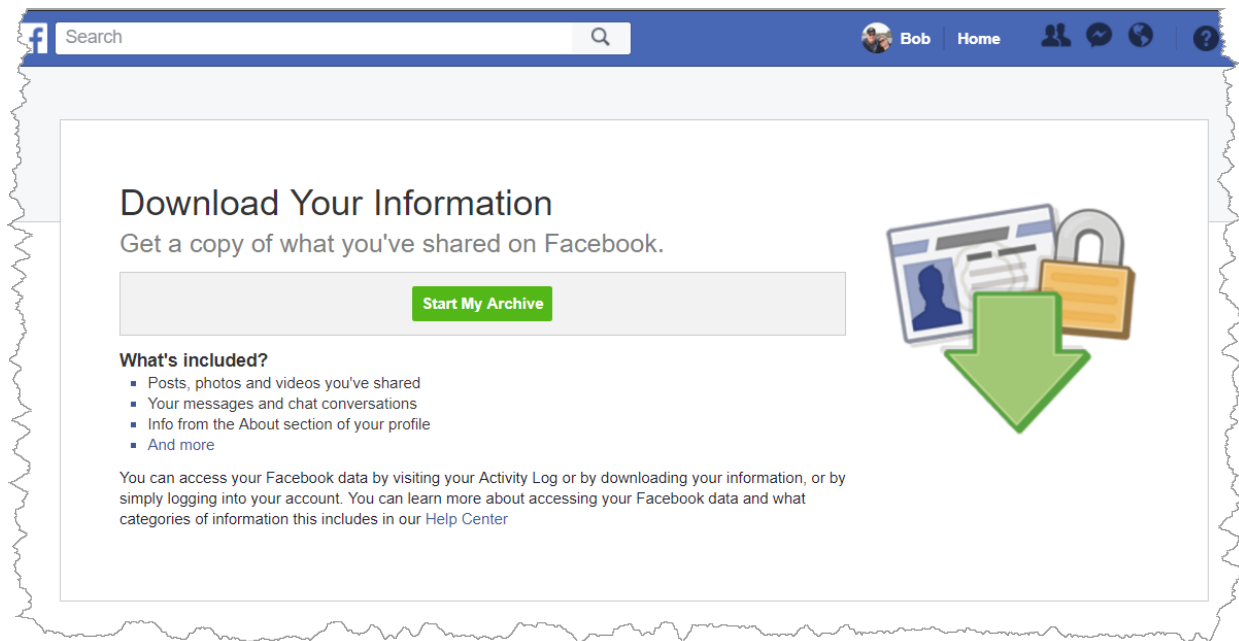
To get started – log into your Facebook account **on a computer** (not a mobile device) and click the “down icon” to the right of the “?” link and choose “Settings”:



Right on the first screen – you’ll see the link that you’re looking for:

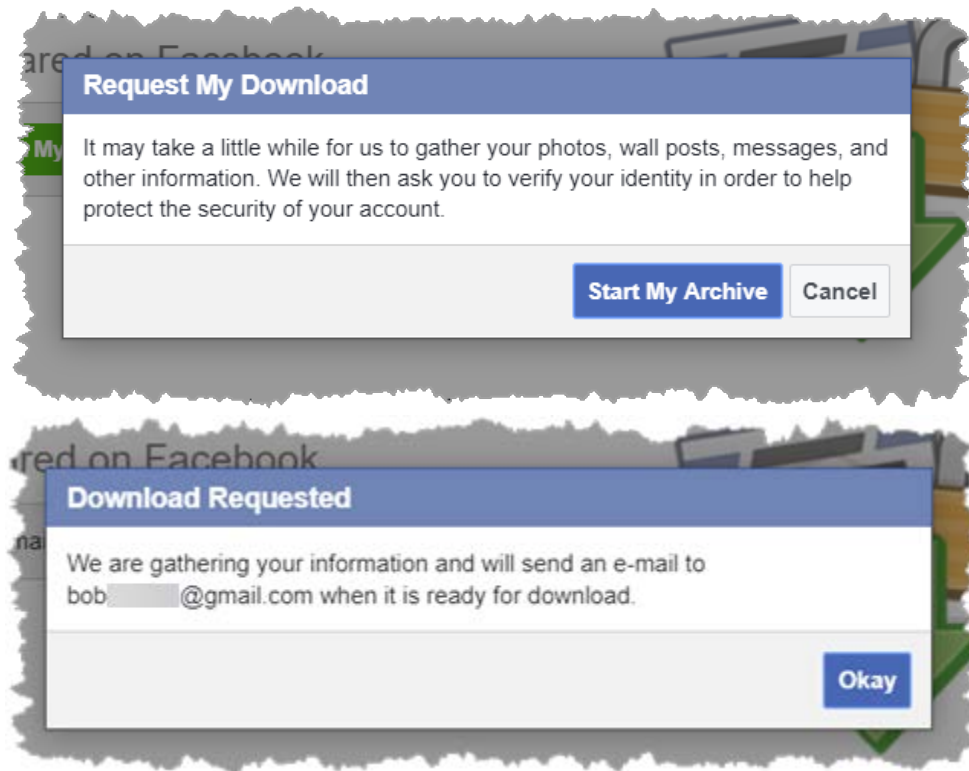


Once you click on that – you’ll see the “Are you sure” screen:



When you click the “Start My Archive” button - you’ll be prompted to enter your password.

You'll then see a couple of dialogs:



Then – you wait.

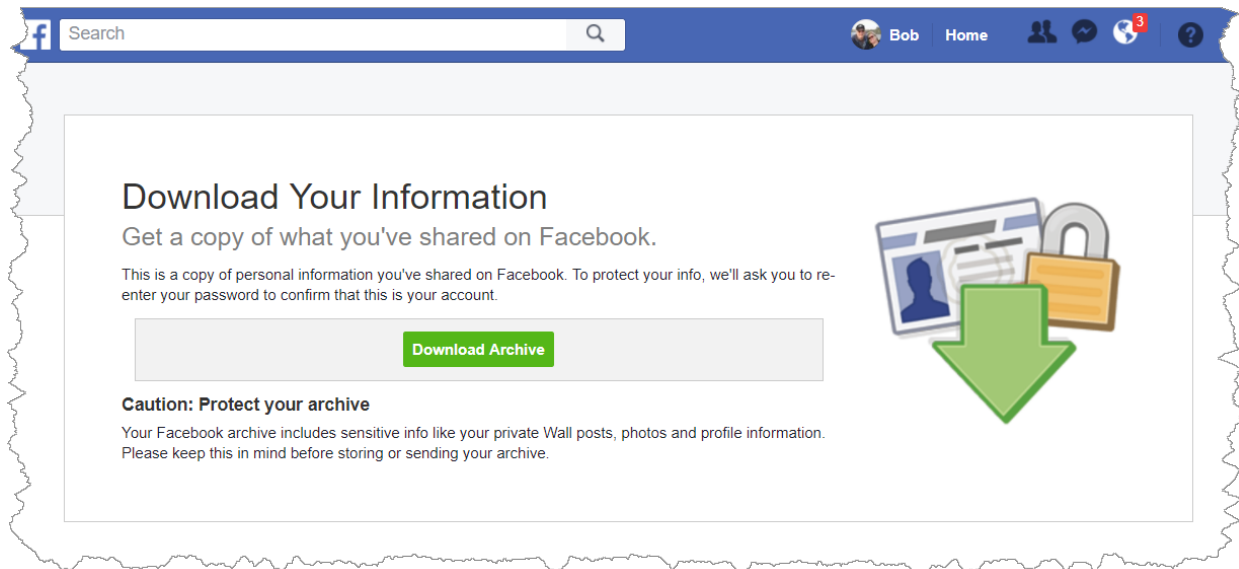
While you're waiting – you may want to check out:

<https://www.facebook.com/help/405183566203254>

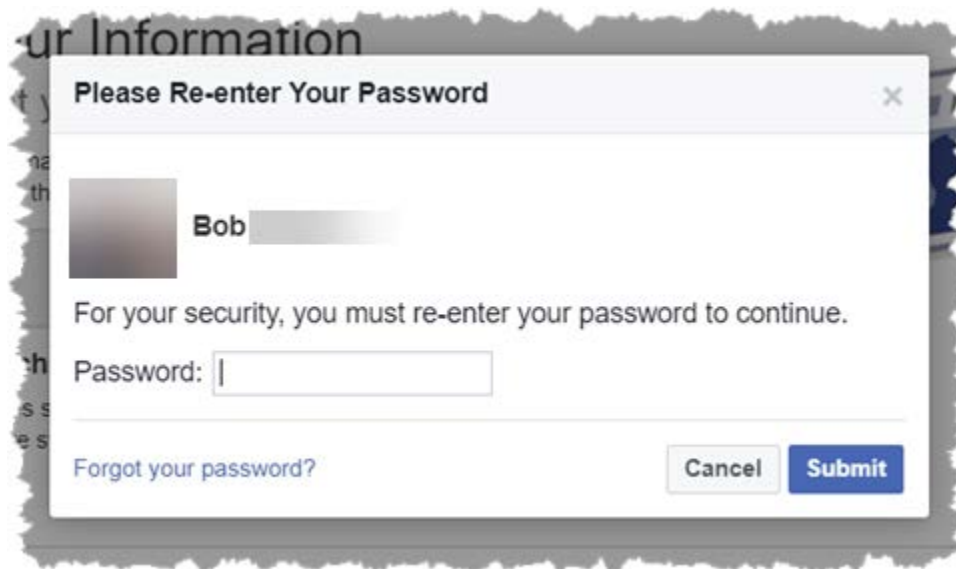
This will tell you all the data you can expect in your download. Quite frankly – I found the list quite disconcerting.

It took about 10 minutes or so for my archive to be ready. You'll get an email with a link to your download.

Once you click the link – it takes you back into Facebook:



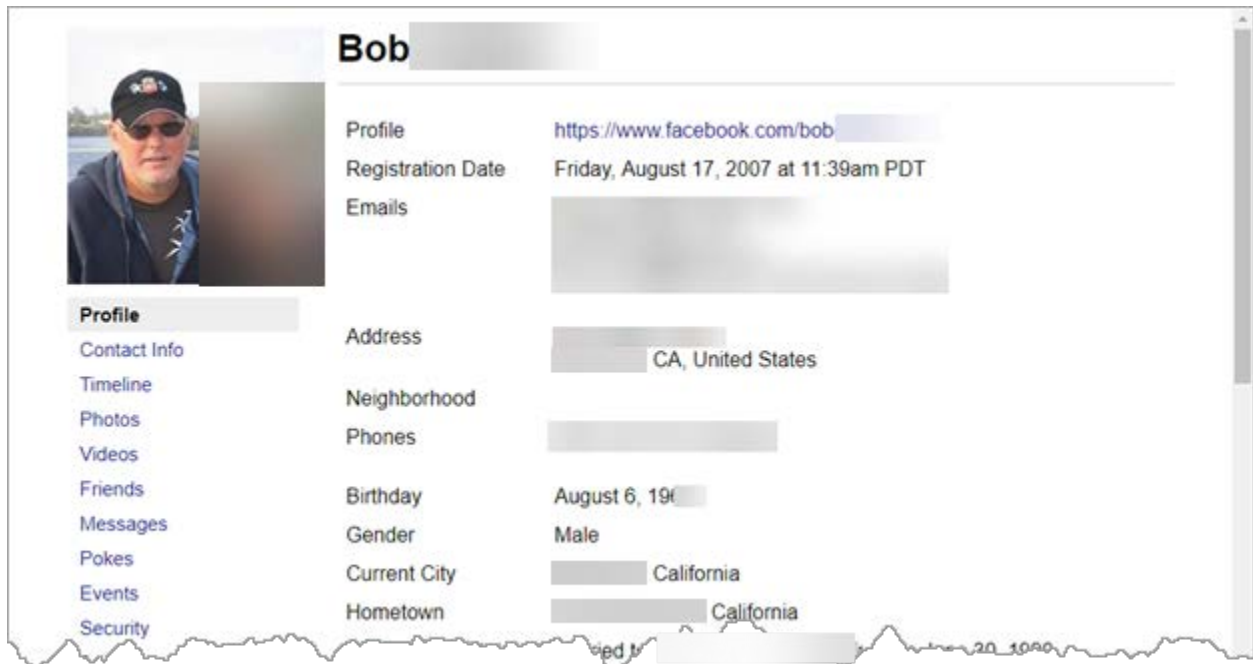
Once you click the “Download Archive” button you’ll be prompted for your password again:



Now – you wait. Again.

My download was 592MB. As .zip file! That is **HALF A GIGABYTE .zip file!** Whoa.

Create a new folder – and put the .zip file in the new folder – and then unzip it. You’ll see a that there are some folders and a file called “index.html”. Double-click the “index.html” file.



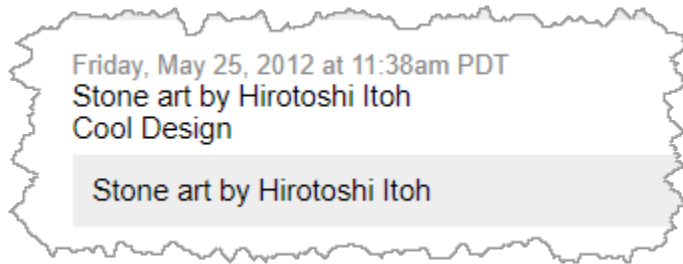
OK – so here’s how it starts out. Telling me I joined Friday, August 7, 2007 at 11:39am PDT.

Then, it just goes on from there. It has all the pages I’ve ever liked – even ones I’ve “unliked”, books I’ve read, movies, TV shows, all the groups I’ve ever been a part of, etc. etc.

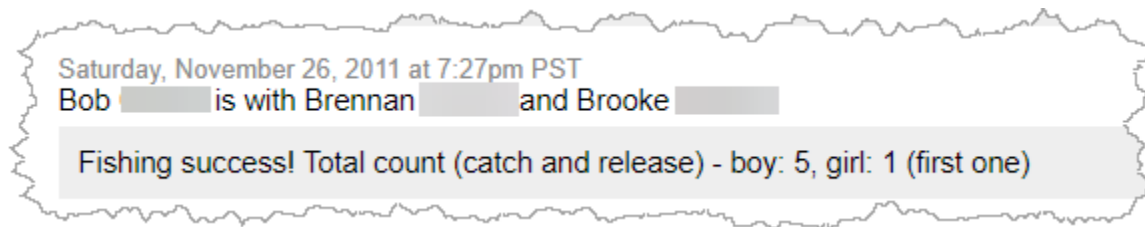
Then, under “Contact Info” – I see the names and phone numbers (all the phone numbers) of ALL my friends who provided a phone number in their profile (**even if it was not visible**).

Moving on to “Timeline” – there is **EVERY SINGLE POST** I’ve ever made. Even ones where I made no comment (e.g. just uploaded a picture).

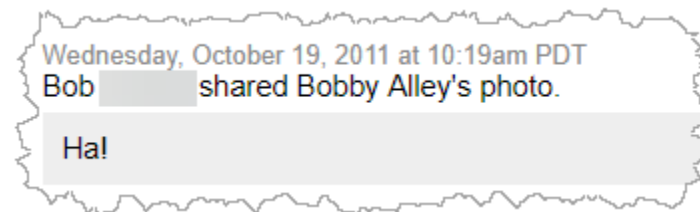
It also has all the stories I shared (where I pasted a link in):



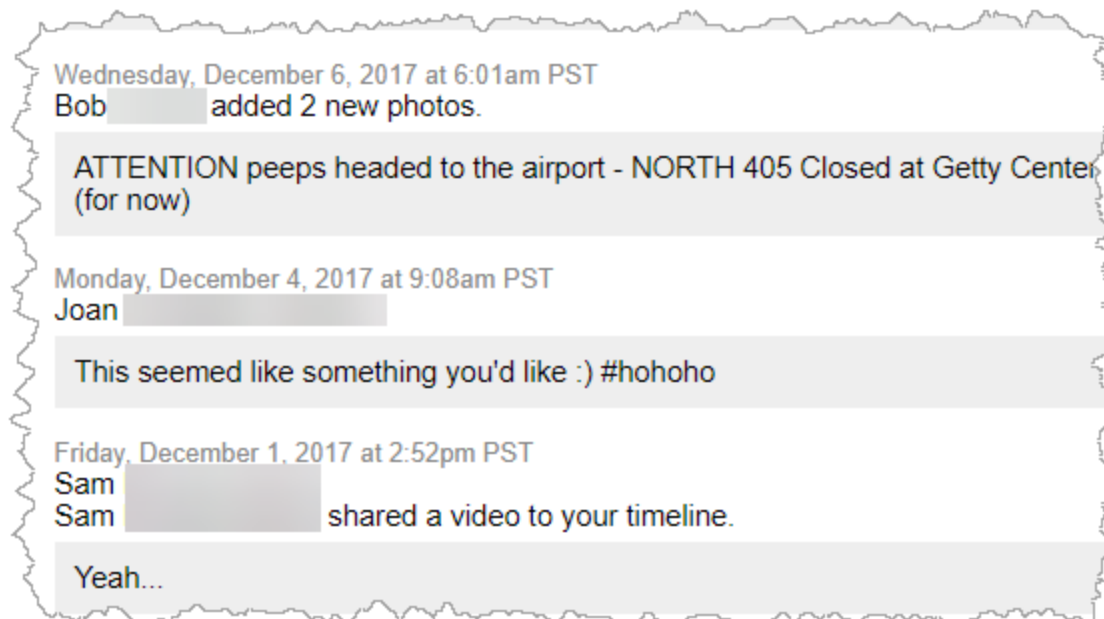
It contains the names of anyone I tagged in any post:



It has the name of the person (or page) of every photo I've "shared":



It has all the times I posted from my mobile app, as well as when anyone posted on my page:



So.... Ummmm.... Yeah. Everything.

Then I moved on to “Photos”... and while it looked like it was random – I realized that they were just the ALBUMS that I had photos in. It also contained all the comments on that album:



Motorcycle Stuff - 31 Photos

Thursday, September 24, 2009 at 4:01pm PDT

Bob [redacted] Before and after shots of the tires...

Thursday, September 24, 2009 at 4:02pm PDT

Alex [redacted] So how long did they last? What brand are the r

Thursday, September 24, 2009 at 5:37pm PDT

Bob [redacted] Hey Alex - they lasted about 8,000 miles (mostly canyon riding)... I was replacing a set of Dunlop Pilot Road 2's with another set that I really like the tires - a LOT! The FJR came with Metzlers originally, after 7,100 miles. These tires are AWESOME. About \$350 for the

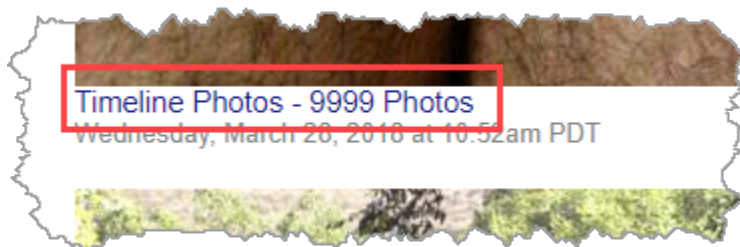
Thursday, September 24, 2009 at 7:51pm PDT

Ummm... here's the thing. If you CLICK on the album name:



It has **EVERY SINGLE PHOTO** you've ever posted – along with the comments under each photo.

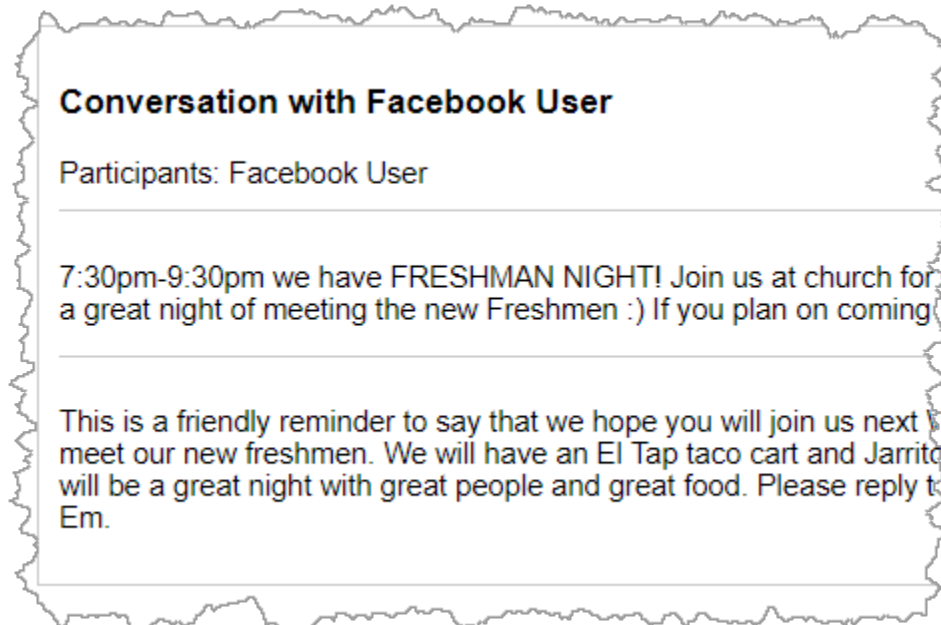
I guess the “good news” is that it appears as if they only take the first 9,999 pictures. For example, I've posted over 13,000 (!) timeline photos – but they “only” downloaded 9,999:



Moving on to “**Videos**” – it was a collection of ALL the videos I had uploaded – along with a couple Facebook-produced “Bob’s Friends” type of videos that I had shared! The interesting thing is that you can click on them and they'll play (they are downloaded to your local drive).

Next we get to “**Friends**”. This was sort of a “ripper” for me.
It shows all my current **Friends** (and the date we became friends).
It shows everyone I’ve sent a **Friend Request** to (and date).
It shows everyone I’ve **Declined a Friend Request** (and date).
It shows everyone I’ve **Removed** – “unfriended” (and date).
And it show all my **Followers** and **Followees** (the people I follow).

Messages – ALL THE MESSAGES. This includes messages where someone spammed me – and I guess they were blocked or it was to a group I was in because all it says is “Facebook User”:



There are also ALL of the messages between me and individuals – INCLUDING any photos or links or files (photos, pdf files, icons, sound files) were included in the conversation. While there are some gaps – I was able to click on a link to a sound file someone messaged me – as well as a pdf that I uploaded to someone else in another conversation.

They even keep the emojis:

Conversation with Chantel, Brenda, Scott and Julie

Participants: Chantel [redacted] Brenda [redacted], Scott [redacted]

Chantel [redacted]

😊

Julie [redacted]

Thanks Chantel. Parenting certainly is a lot of work and at times downright frustrating with the kiddos. I am happy to still be in your lives and will continue to support [redacted] again and see you guys.

Chantel [redacted]

Thanks guys! ❤️ ya all!

Now we move on to “Events”. This has a list of **EVERY event I was ever INVITED to** – as well as my response:

Queen Nation at Conejo Community Park 9/6!

Conejo Community Park, 1175 Hendricks Ave, Thousand Oaks, California
Monday, September 6, [redacted] at 5:00pm PDT - Monday, September 6, 2016

Declined

Kristin and Walker's Wedding

The Denver Botanic Gardens with Reception at the Magnolia Ballroom
Sunday, September 5, [redacted] at 8:30am PDT - Sunday, September 5, 2016

Attending

Under “Security” it has **EVERY SINGLE login session** I’ve ever done. It also includes the Date, IP address, browser (and platform) as well as the last two digits of the security cookie:

Unknown

Created: Thursday, December 14, 2017 at 6:25am PST
Updated: Wednesday, December 31, 1969 at 4:00pm PST
IP Address: [REDACTED]
Browser: Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 10.0; Win64; x64) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/63.0.3239.84 Safari/537.36
Cookie: ...a1Hc

Account Activity

Session updated

Wednesday, March 28, 2018 at 11:07am PDT
IP Address: [REDACTED]
Browser: Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 10.0; Win64; x64) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/65.0.3325.146 Safari/537.36
Cookie: ...7Fqy

Session updated

There is the “**Applications**” link – but if you read my last article I got RID of all the applications that I “logged in with Facebook” – except one. That was the only one that showed up under my “Applications” link.

Now we move on to the Grand Finale – the “**Ads**” section. This contains “**Ads Topics**”:

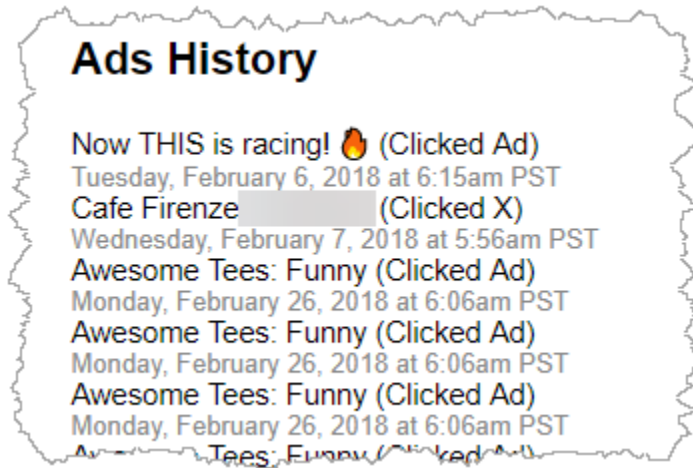
Bob [REDACTED]

Ads Topics **WTF??**

- History (European TV channel)
- Panties
- Top Gear (magazine)
- Avocado
- Grace (Mandy Capristo album)
- Christianity
- Sacha Baron Cohen
- Sound
- Religion
- House of Cards (U.S. TV series)
- Love
- Construction
- Manufacturing

Profile
Contact Info
Timeline
Photos

It also contains an “Ads History” – with every single ad I clicked on:



The thing that REALLY was interesting – was the very last section
“Advertisers with your contact info” :



Mine had **221 COMPANIES** that have my contact info. Just by looking at the list here – it appears as if I logged in while in The Netherlands – as most of these companies are Dutch.

So – what can you do about it?

- You can contact all the companies (221!) who have your contact data and tell them to delete it;
- You can shrug your shoulders and count it as a cost of being social
- You can plan your Frexit (Facebook Exit)

Whatever you decide – I hope you found this guide... ummmmm... “Enlightening.”