



AOL's disturbing glimpse into users' lives

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http://www.news.com/AOLs-disturbing-glimpse-into-users-lives/2100-1030_3-6103098.html

Story last modified Wed Aug 09 04:51:28 PDT 2006

AOL's publication of the search histories of more than 650,000 of its users has yielded more than just one of the year's bigger privacy scandals.

The 21 million search queries also have exposed an innumerable number of life stories ranging from the mundane to the illicit and bizarre.

For its part, AOL [has apologized](#) for a researcher's disclosure of the massive database and has yanked the file from its Web site. It was too late: The database already had been mirrored.

That database does not include names or user identities. Instead, it lists only a unique ID number for each user. What that means is that it's possible to view the search terms that users of a single account typed in while using [AOL Search](#) during a three-month period. (Google, Yahoo, and MSN Search aren't included.)

From that massive list of search terms, for instance, it's possible to guess that AOL user 710794 is an overweight golfer, owner of a 1986 Porsche 944 and 1998 Cadillac SLS, and a fan of the University of Tennessee Volunteers Men's Basketball team. The same user, 710794, is interested in the Cherokee County School District in Canton, Ga., and has looked up the Suwanee Sports Academy in Suwanee, Ga., which caters to local youth, and the Youth Basketball of America's Georgia affiliate.

That's pretty normal. What's not is that user 710794 also regularly searches for "lolitas," a term commonly used to describe photographs and videos of minors who are nude or engaged in sexual acts.

The following are a series of excerpts compiled by CNET News.com from the AOL search logs, with each user's search terms included in chronological order.

AOL user 311045 apparently owns a Scion XB automobile in need of new brake pads that is in the process of being upgraded with performance oil filters. User 311045, possibly a Florida resident, is preoccupied with another topic as well:

how to change brake pads on scion xb
2005 us open cup florida state champions
how to get revenge on a ex
how to get revenge on a ex girlfriend
how to get revenge on a friend who f---ed you over
replacement bumper for scion xb
florida department of law enforcement
crime stoppers florida

Based on the number of local searches, AOL user 1515830 appears to be a resident of Ohio's Mahoning County. On March 1, user 1515830 was trying to find the amount of calories in chai tea and bananas. But on March 9, the searches took a darker turn:

chai tea calories
calories in bananas
aftermath of incest
how to tell your family you're a victim of incest
pottery barn
curtains
surgical help for depression

*oakland raiders comforter set
can you adopt after a suicide attempt
who is not allowed to adopt
i hate men
medication to enhance female desire
jobs in denver colorado
teaching positions in denver colorado
how long will the swelling last after my tummy tuck
divorce laws in ohio
free remote keyloggers
baked macaroni and cheese with sour cream
how to deal with anger
teaching jobs with the denver school system
marriage counseling tips
anti psychotic drugs*

Revenge is a common theme, though of course it's impossible to guess whether an AOL user has criminal intent or is in the middle of writing a true-crime novel. In the case of AOL user 17556639, the jury's still out:

*how to kill your wife
pictures of dead people
photo of dead people
car crash photo*

Some AOL users seem to be worried that an abusive partner in a relationship may come back to hurt them. This person, AOL user 005315, searched for information about prison inmates, gang members, sociopaths in relationships, and women who were murdered in southern California last year:

*resources for utility bill paying assistance in southern california
section 8 housing southern california
los angeles county ca. gang member pictures
orange county california jails inmate information
fractured ankle
letters and responses written by women to emotionally
abusive partners
men that use emotional and physical abandonment to control their partner
warning signs of a mans infidelity or sexual addiction
the sociopathic relationship
southern california newspaper stories about woman murdered by boyfriend in pomona december2005
names of females murdered or found dead in pomona california in 2005
characteristics of a sociopath in a relationship
a person that shows lack of empathy
help in writing a letter to a abusive narcissistic ex boyfriend
how to hurt the narcissistic man
retaliating against the narcissistic man*

AOL user 9486162 appears to live near Edisto Beach, S.C., and could be a poker aficionado who's a fan of the University of Kentucky's football team. User 9486162 rarely used his or her AOL account for searching in March, but was preoccupied with one disturbing topic on April 26:

*university of kentucky football
hold'em poker school
ways to kill yourself
suicide by natural gas
how to kill oneself by natural gas
assisted suicide
suicide by overdosing
how long does carbon monoxide poisoning take to kill a person
over dose ways to commit suicide
university of kentucky 2007 football recruits
texas hold'em poker on line seminars*

employment needed- louisville ky

Whoever wrote that hell hath no fury like a woman scorned had clearly never experienced the Internet. For a three-month period, AOL user 2708, apparently a resident of the greater Boston area, was searching for little else. Her search terms suggest that she signed up her ex-boyfriend for Columbia House CDs, articles on "gay life," and Christian literature--while shopping for women's Harley Davidson boots. User 2708's ex apparently lives in New Hampshire:

*revenge tactics**the woman's book of revenge**dirty tricks for chicks**voice changer**how to humiliate someone**bill me pay later for cd's**scams to play on people**how to get revenge on an old lover**i hate my ex boyfriend**how to really make someone hurt for the pain they caused to someone else**columbia house**advice from women who have seeked revenge on old lovers**makehimsuffer.com**how to say goodbye hurtfully**how to report child neglect in the state of new hampshire**free articles on gay life that can be mailed to me**free christian things**free gay magazines**free angry stuff to send to an ex lover**how to permanently delete information from your hard drive**makehimpay.net**women's harley davidson boots**www.match.com**the worst thing to send someone via email**thong dancewear**locatecell.com**what can i do to an old lover for revenge**mean revenge tactics**death records in hampstead new hampshire*

Searches performed by one AOL user living near Charlton, Mass., appear to show how one man went through the process of divorce, finding an apartment, and fighting for custody of his children. This is what AOL user 4331025 typed in over a three-month period:

*charlton ma apartments**gourmet condiments**cheer up plaques**mass custody definitions**kids health**wastewater jobs mass**visitation schedule**kids gym places in worcester**mass wastewater certification exam forums**counter surveillance products**sample visitation schedules**how are fat girlfriends**salem probate court decisions**revenge for a cheating spouse**civil war a fathers guide to wining custody**mass licensed daycare providers**fish chowder recipes**win your child custody war books for sale**martindale hubbell*

first date dos and donts
how to satisfy a woman
penis enlargement
how to get revenge on exwife
how to do a background check with a liscense number

Learning to be single is a common theme among the lonely souls hoping to find relationship advice through AOL Search. AOL user 100906 appears to live in Cincinnati and is wrestling with serious personal and career issues at the same time:

cinncinati bell iwireless
addicted to love
women who love to much
learning to be single
should you call your ex
when your ex goes out of his way to run into u
slim upper thighs
inches a weigh
prophet mohamed life teaching
missed period or light spotting
birthcontrol for morning after pill
I&n federal credit union
hes just not that into u
i dont have a career
should i get back with my divorced husband
when you have less property than you u bought
what talking in tounges really means
questions about the bible
do i qualify for food stamps in kentucky

One poor sap, AOL user 11574916, appears to have been preoccupied with two things: finding a mail order bride and avoiding a drunken driving court date in Florida. There's some indication that user 11574916 might have landed in New Orleans:

cocaine in urine
asian mail order brides
states reciprocity with florida
florida dui laws
extradtion from new york to florida
mail order brides from largos
will one be extradited for a dui
cooking jobs in french quarter new orleans
will i be extradited from ny to fl on a dui charge

One AOL user, 3540871, apparently lives in Joliet, Ill., and was looking for advice on how to get a job with a criminal conviction. If user 3540871's search queries are any indication, she's a single mother whose abusive husband is currently locked up in a county jail outside of Chicago:

i have an interview at comcast and i need help
cheap rims for a ford focus
how can i get a job in joliet il with a theft on my background
i need to trace a cellular location
i need to know if my spouse is cheating and i need to do a cellular trace for free
jobs with no background checks
how can i get a job with a conviction
motels in joliet il
motels in gurnee il area for under 40 dollars
how much will you pay me to donate my eggs
my boyfriend threatened me with a knife and went to jail now im worried he'll hurt me when he gets out
my baby's father physically abuses me
how to find out if my husband is in (jail)
my husband needs free help with his anger problem in joliet il

cash loans that you can pay back in more than 14 days
what steps do i need for an associates in paralegal studies
back pay child support
uhaul trucking in joliet il

April 15, or tax day, happened to fall in the middle of AOL's published search logs. They spanned March, April and May. In March, AOL user 262465 apparently was searching for ways--legal or not--to lower his or her income taxes:

gerards restaurant in dc
tax avoidance and tax evasion
tax avoidance and tax evasion and donald korb
paul o'neil and tax avoidance
tax analysts
can a certified financial planner's advice can be deductible
how to calculate gpa
cherry blossoms

An AOLer who's an avid motorcyclist and Mustang enthusiast near Reading, Pa., also has some darker tastes, if user 3544012's search history is any indication. Making the situation more interesting is that user 3544012 may be getting married as well, if his or her searches for wedding table numbers are relevant:

homes for sale in pa
repo cars reading pa
where to get cna license pa (Ed. Note: CNA is a certified nurse aide)
homes for sale in morgantown pa
legends night club reading pa
beasteality
inceststories.free-beastiality.name
hourse f--ing free
progressive motorcycle insurance
circumsize pictures
all inclusive trip to las vegas
mustang svo 2.3 fuel pressure
table numbers for weddings
mustang cobra chrome roll bar
beastiality
coldwell bankers realty
harley performance cafe
mustang sally gentlemen club

Many AOL users performed the occasional search for porn. But a few, like user 336865, seemed to look for nothing but. Here are some not-always-savory searches that user 336865 performed:

sexy pregnant ladies naked
nudist
sexy feet
child rape stories
tamagotchi town.com
preteen sex stories
illegal child porn
incest stories
10 year old nude pics
preteen nude models
illegal anime porn
yu-gi-oh

A woman affiliated with Temple University in Philadelphia, perhaps a student, shared her life's troubles with AOL Search this spring. That woman, user 591476, typed:

replica loius vuitton bag
how to stop bingeing
how to secretly poison your ex

how to color hair with clairol professional
girdontdatehim.com
websites that ask for payment by checks
south beach diet
nausea in the first two weeks of pregnancy
breast reduction
how to starve yourself
rikers island inmate info number
inmatelookup.gov
www.tuportal.temple.edu
how to care for natural black hair
scarless breast reduction
pregnancy on birth control
temple.edu
diet pills

Is searching for detailed information on murder a crime? Not if you're an aspiring true crime writer, as user 1755245 seems to be:

federal bureau of investigation
murder in selmer tenn.
how many people buy true crime books
how well do true crime books sell
forming a limited liability corporation in alabama
licensing of private investigators in alabama
first degree murder kentucky criminal code state of kentucky
alabama association of private investigators
arkansas private investigator requirements
office of secretary of defense united states
st. margaret's hospital washington d.c.
john hinkley

Some searches are just plain weird, or scary, or both. Here are excerpt of what AOL user 59920, who apparently lives in the Boulder, Colo., area, typed in over a three-month period:

cats skinned in fort lupton co
cats killed in fort lupton co
jonbenets autopsy photos
crime scene photos of the crawl space and duffle bag in ramseys house
sexy bathing suits
what a neck looks like after its been strangled
pictures what a neck looks like after it was strangled
pictures of murder victims that have been strangled
pictures of murder by strangulation
knitting stitches
what jonbenet would look like today
new jersey park police
jonbenet in her casket
ransom note in the movie obsession what did it read
movie ransom notes
scouting knots
manila rope and its uses
brown paper bags cops use for evidence
rope to use to hog tie someone
body transport boulder colorado

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glimpse definition: 1. to see something or someone for a very short time or only partly: 2. an occasion when you seeâ€¦. Learn more.Â

The book provides no glimpse of the presence of any entity other than small farmers in the frontier. From Cambridge English Corpus.

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