

Facebook's graph search is scary



Hannah Madsen
OPINION WRITER

Profiling Facebook-style makes creeping random strangers even more effective. Otherwise known as Facebook Graph Search, this aspect of the social media network is still being beta-tested and allows you to search for people by what they like, the relatives they have, where they work and where they live — among other things.

Although some people do have publicly viewable profiles, if you wanted to find out what someone liked before this, you'd often have to find them by name and look through their profile — after they gave you permission to access it. Now if you want to search "women who are married" and add in more specific criteria like "likes stripping" and "lives in New York City," you can. Some of the searches are a little bit funny — "mothers of Jews who like bacon" was an example given by Tom Scott, a British comedian randomly selected to beta-test Graph Search.

Some of them, though, are frightening — and give startling glimpses of new ways to find people through aspects of their profile that they didn't realize had to stay hidden. Graph Search is dangerous, and lots of people are underestimating how it reconfigures the information

found through searching processes used by Facebook.

Tom Scott highlights other uses of Graph Search in his Tumblr feed, Actual Facebook Graph Searches. Among other things, he searched "married people who like prostitutes" and "current employers of people who like racism." A more troubling experiment was "men who like men in Tehran, Iran and like Islam," which opens up a whole new can of worms in the form of minority discrimination and identification. Ultimately, these searches focus on information that should be able to be restricted and could act as new tools for extremist groups and oppressive governments.

Facebook has never been the perfect picture of privacy, but people should be able to expect at least a little sense of security about how their information is accessed and what strangers can see.

Graph Search and its potential applications might not be a horrible thing if most people placed safeguards on their information or users who searched for things only used it for positive applications — like maybe starting support groups or reconnecting with old friends. However, history has shown that

when people are given the opportunity to share too much, they will take advantage of every chance to tell the world about every time they fart or eat Kraft Dinner. Beyond that, people can't be trusted with the abundance of information Graph Search has to offer, because Facebook has been proven a very effective tool for internet stalkers. Graph Search makes stalking easier because if you don't know someone's name, you just have to know basic information about them, some of which could be guessed or observed.

Facebook has never been the perfect picture of privacy, but people should be able to expect at least some sense of security about how their information is accessed and what strangers can see. Right now people can be found through networks they place themselves into, friends they have in common with the searcher and their name, which limits the potential searchers to a few degrees of separation from the subject of the search. Because Graph Search uses accessory information, it opens up the potential for anyone to find you using peripheral information that might not be high-priority when you place restrictions on your account.

This increased exposure of people's private information is dangerous, reduces any semblance of privacy offered by Facebook to almost nil and foreshadows how the network is working to make information accessible to as many people as possible, including total strangers.

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MRA's must work with feminists on causes

(Re: "MRAs misunderstand feminism," by Paige Gorsak, Jan 23.)

There is a dent in my wall — and my head — from reading these comments.

Having a penis myself, I believe that circumcision is an issue that needs to be discussed. But because I also have a brain, I think that MRAs and like-minded men are wrong in their tactics.

It's as if they think there's only so much activism to go around. They feel a need to — as Paige says — tear others down to build themselves up.

At the very least, let's have feminist and men's groups engage the public together.

But alas, I am a hypocrite. I do value one over the other! For some strange reason I devote more of my time towards stopping the street harassment and sexual assault of women than I do thinking about Duluth's "Power Wheel" and baby penises.

Thanks for the article, Paige.

Scott Travis
VIA WEB

No, you misunderstand Men's rights activism

(Re: "MRAs misunderstand feminism," by Paige Gorsak, Jan 23.)

Paige is the one who misunderstands feminism. MRAs have to focus it because feminists oppose almost everything they do.

When Erin Pizzey wanted to acknowledge violent females and thus help male victims, the feminists threatened and attacked her and kicked her out of the organisation she founded.

When Michelle Elliot started to highlight the issue of female paedophiles (and their mostly male victims) she was abused by feminists who didn't want to acknowledge that female paedophiles existed.

When Warren Farrell wanted to talk about male suicide it was feminists who smeared him and blockaded his event. They then lied about everything that happened and pretended it was their rights that had been violated.

When laws seeking to protect men from false allegations are proposed who is the first in line to stop them? Why feminists of course. And almost every time a woman kills her husband all she has to do is alleged the tiniest amount of abuse and regardless of the truth of her allegations an army of feminists will try to stop her facing justice.

Feminists are mostly female supremacists who will do anything to get their way and to harm men. When women are behind in some area such as education or employment then it's a disaster, and when it's men who are disadvantaged it's a brilliant victory and the men getting what they deserve.

Feminism has become a hate movement that opposes the idea of men's rights as human rights. We will never achieve equality until men and women come together to expose the lies of these misandrists.

Dave B
VIA WEB

MRA's are right to fight against feminism

(Re: "MRA's misunderstand feminism," by Paige Gorsak, Jan 23.)

The reason feminism gets a lot of heat from MRAs is because real policy has been made utilizing feminist researched data as its basis. Those basis have been shown to be

knowingly propagated falsehoods, advanced by PhDs — the feminist vanguard. These PhDs have not faced censure of any kind for knowingly distorting the truth and/or telling bald-faced lies and continue to teach post-secondary students.

As a quick example, if you have a intro. level course in women's studies text, just take a quick browse. See if you find a reference to Margaret Meed's study of the Tchambuli tribe and its matriarchal character.

If you do, you should know that this example has been thoroughly debunked and Meed herself recanted. Yet, the Tchambuli example is still widely utilized (despite being debunked more than 30 years ago) because there are no other known matriarchal societies. If the text in question was published less than 20 years ago, that's a red flag.

This sort of offense is pretty mild compared to intentionally distorting facts on domestic violence and rape, although it is an academic disgrace. The lies of the academically and politically influential feminists have led to many injustices in the system (which you do recognize).

But its not just the initial lies, it's the pattern of silencing opposition and repeating those lies ad nauseam which perpetuates these injustices. Naive individuals may think that it's a simple misunderstanding, but it's not.

Influential feminists have demonstrated that they are not open to changing their mind, even when their data is wrong or their methodology flawed. Nor do they debate using evidence and logic; their primary tools are shaming language, strawmen, ad hominem attacks and false equivocation.

MRAs understand feminism all-too-well, that is why most oppose it.

"Brad"
VIA WEB

I know what feminism is about

(Re: "MRAs misunderstand feminism," by Paige Gorsak, Jan 23.)

Well let's see... I am supportive of MRAs now, and critical of feminism. I was a feminist for my entire adult life up until about four years ago. At university I was called "insightful" on gender issues by a feminist communications professor. I have had numerous feminist friends and girlfriends and lived with a feminist woman who had a degree in women's studies from a prestigious university. I was a regular reader of numerous Feminist magazines and online journals. I did pro-bono work with several women's groups.

But I guess I must not know what Feminism is. Makes sense.

"TMG"
VIA WEB

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Letters to the editor should be no longer than 350 words, and should include the author's name, program, year of study, and student ID number to be considered for publication.

Holy cow! We got a ton of comments this week. Good job on getting angry and writing in, you guys. I'm proud of each of you. Just make sure to check your submissions for spelling and grammar mistakes. It saves me so much time.

I have to go. I just booked a trip to the Neverlands.

Females deserve the right to fight on front lines



Lindsay Moore
OPINION WRITER

Overdue gender "equality" has been officially presented this week in the United States in the form of front-line combat jobs for women, but there's still a long way to go before this equality is real.

This past Wednesday, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta lifted the 1994 ban that prevented women from having positions in front-line combat ranks in the US Army. According to *TIME*, women make up approximately 14 per cent of active US military personnel — and they now have an equal chance to defend their country in the same way men have been afforded. In a recent poll on debate.org, 58 per cent of people agreed that it's about time female soldiers are given the ability to serve in the same manner as men. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, there have been many complaints from women in the ranks about being excluded from "real fighting." However, regardless of potentially being given 230,000 new jobs, there are still social and cultural problems that limit the possibilities presented to women.

One important reason for the lack of women in the front lines are the assigned gender roles that have already been assumed. Instead of being handed guns, women throughout history were given jobs that were more "fitting" for their gender. Approximately 59,000 nurses served in the US Army Nurse Corps during World War II, and this wasn't the only organization specifically for women. There were also groups like the UK



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Women's Voluntary Service, who provided assistance in civilian aid, food conveying and the mending of clothing.

However, there are more serious social problems that keep women out of these traditionally male roles. These issues include the status of women in different cultures, as well as mixed gender living quarters and the troubles presented with amorous relations. Both the Huffington Post and BBC News have reported shocking facts about sexual harassment and abuse within US Army ranks. Female soldiers are more likely to be raped by their male comrades than to be killed in combat, according to the Department of Defense.

Chantelle Henneberry, a female soldier who fought in Iraq, provides just one example of the way women

are treated. Her sergeant sexually harassed her and after she reported him she was transferred and he was promoted. Many women don't report incidences of abuse due to the fear of alienation or being demoted. The real problem in US ranks is not the number of jobs being given to women, but rather the way women are treated in general.

In 2013, with an increasing amount of equality being spread, women should be able to have a career, earn promotions, and make a living in the same ways men have. Until these backwards gender roles are done away with, it doesn't matter how many bans are lifted.

A combat role in the army, while being a dangerous job, is a job all the same. Women should be afforded a safe and respectful workspace.