

Facebook News Feed

“Privacy” and “lawsuit” have become synonymous with “Facebook” these days.

In mid-December 2007, Facebook filed a lawsuit against an Ontario adult entertainment company, alleging that the company hacked into the website and attempted to access the personal information of Facebook users [1]. The court documents did not specify what information was accessed by the company.

Then, in early January 2008, police in Camrose, Alberta, used Facebook to catch and charge four teens that killed a cat in a microwave during a break-in [2]. A Facebook “hate group,” set-up to expose the teens, was shut-down by police after the website published the teens’ names. The Facebook writer who published the names contravened the Youth Criminal Justice Act, which prohibits naming youths charged with or convicted of a crime. The writer also increased the likelihood of a mistrial.

Companies and police are not the only parties monitoring Facebook [3]. Recently, Brigadier General Peter Atkinson of the Canadian military warned Canadian soldiers serving in Afghanistan that Taliban and Al-Qaeda insurgents were using the information from soldiers’ Internet postings to determine the accuracy and effectiveness of their attacks [4]. Atkinson claimed that “insurgents glean as much as 80 percent of their intelligence” from postings on websites such as Facebook, YouTube and personal blogs, where soldiers have provided descriptions and photos of specific incidents, even casualties.

[1] “Facebook sues Ontario porn company over alleged hacking” CBC News (17 December 2007).

[2] Jodie Sinnema, “Web outs 4 in cat killing” Edmonton Journal (7 January 2008).

[3] In June 2007 the Ontario Provincial Police were reported to have used the website to monitor teenage bush parties. See Martha Peden, “[Guess Who’s Creeping on Your Facebook](#)” Centre for Constitutional Studies (27 June 2007). See my other articles with regard to Facebook and privacy, namely: “[Privacy Rights in Crisis across Country](#)” Centre for Constitutional Studies (15 October 2007) and “[Corporations, Government, in Troubled Privacy Waters](#)” Centre for Constitutional Studies (9 January 2008).

[4] “Canadian soldiers warned of privacy risk” Moldova.org. (15 February 2008). See also: Fred Stopsky, “Is your Facebook account aiding Al-Qaida?” (weblog) (15 February 2008).