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

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### **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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