


# Your voting history was leaked, and that's not the worst part

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Credit: Airman 1st Class Janine Thibault (US Air Force)

Money, religion, politics. These are the topics you don't discuss with others. Have you ever had a conversation go from friendly to antagonistic? Chances are it's because it involved one of these topics.

There's a reason we go out of way to avoid openly talking about these issues. We want them private so we keep them private.

But sometimes, that choice is taken out of our hands.

A recent data breach [exposed the personal details of 200 million Americans](#). In addition to birthdates, addresses, and telephone numbers the breach included the political views of everyone on the list.

That's right, now everyone knows who you voted for. Not just for the recent election but your [entire voting history](#).

But it gets worse than that. As the investigation shows *"the data also contained citizens' suspected religious affiliations, ethnicities and political biases, such as where they stood on controversial topics like gun control, the right to abortion and stem cell research."*

So literally the type of information most people wouldn't even disclose to the people closest to them is now available for anyone and everyone to see.

It's bad enough that we have to deal with breaches [that expose our credit](#), now we have to put up with our political beliefs being out in the open.

There's no getting around how damaging this breach is.

## Political damage control

This leak is a big problem with far-reaching consequences for everyone on the list.

There are many people who will be put in an extremely uncomfortable situation because of this leak. Think about the many ways this can affect someone.

Do you live in a very conservative neighborhood and vote liberal? Or maybe you come from a very liberal family and you voted conservative? What if you voted against that one platform that everyone else you know was in favor of?...some food for thought for sure.

It's also not uncommon to see someone [lose their jobs because of their political beliefs](#). So yes, the consequences of this leak can be quite damaging.

There's a reason why many people keep this topic to themselves. It's a very personal issue and, under some circumstances, it can be the cause of turmoil and upheaval.



It's not exaggerating to say that this breach will cause lives to be damaged. As far as data breaches go this has the potential to cause as much personal grief as the [Ashley Madison](#) one.

Of course, there is another side to this whole issue.

A side that affects even those individuals that aren't bothered by their political beliefs being in the open. A side that goes beyond social ramifications and into financial strife.

Simply put, this leaked data can be used for phishing and identity theft scams.

For cybercriminals a leak like this is a goldmine. The more information they have on you the better they can target you. It's only a matter of time before many people on the list suffer significant financial losses because of the breach.

As you can see the breach can, in some way or another, harm everyone on the list.

## Deep Root of trouble

Let's be honest, this list shouldn't have been compiled in the first place. The company that created the list, and was ultimately responsible for its leak, was Deep Root Analytics.

Deep Root Analytics bills itself as a media analytics firm that *"allows you to reach the right audience with the right message and generate a higher return on your advertising budget."* So at its best this list was compiled as a means to advertise to you.

However, it's not so simple. A list with this type of data can easily be manipulated for political gains. If some candidate or party knows where you lean on one issue then they can easily try to sway you when it comes to other issues.

Why was a list like this even compiled? We'll never know the true intent for the creation of the list. Nor will we truly know how the list was actually being used. And that's the scary part of this whole situation.

The fact is a list was created that contained some of the most personal details of an individual, used for whatever unknown purposes, and then irresponsibly leaked to the world. It's a massive failure all around for Deep Root.

This leak also comes at a time where there is already [great concern about election hacking](#). It will just add to the distrust that is simmering between the public and the election process.

## All breaches are not created equal

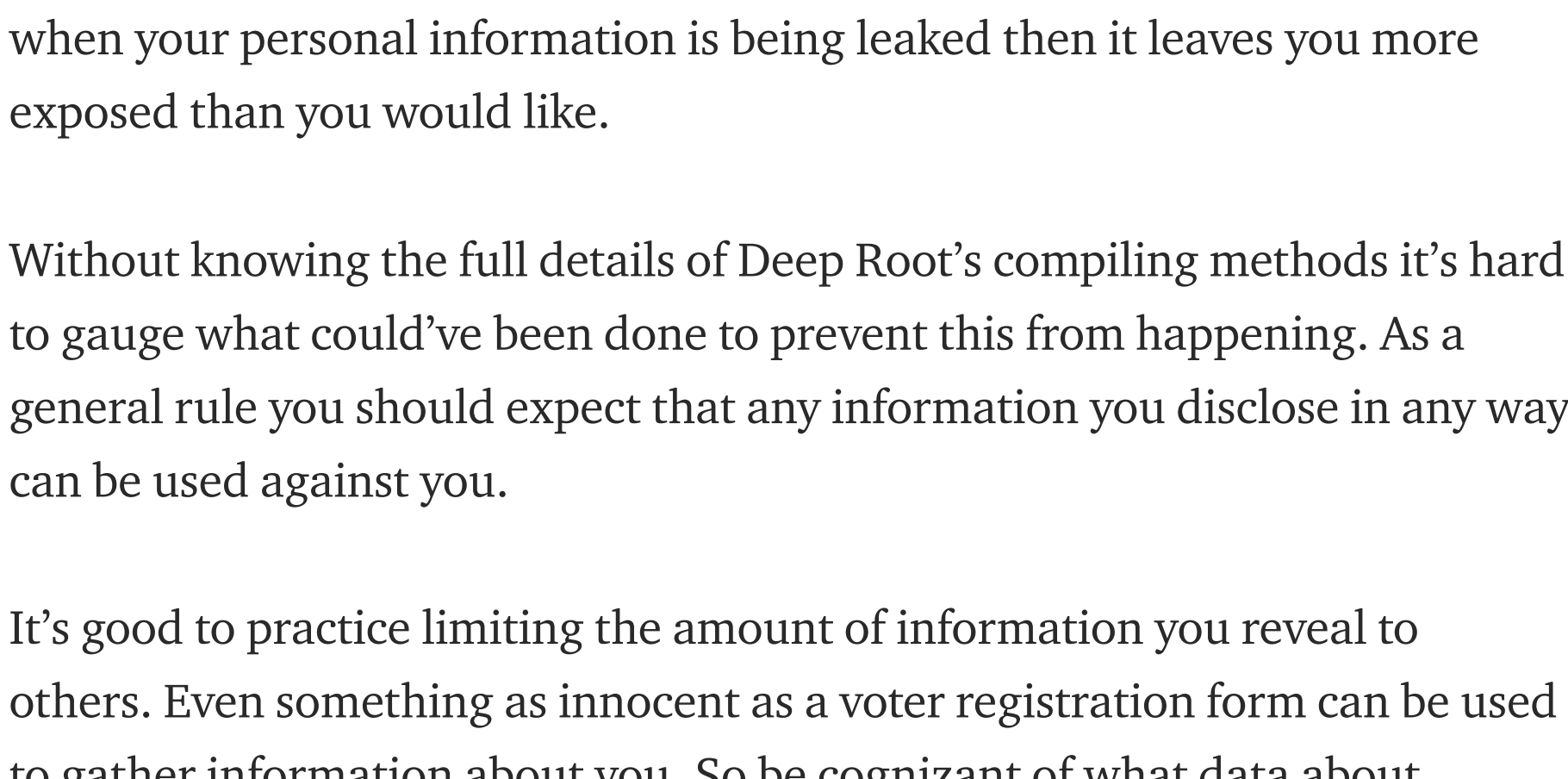
Unfortunately we live in a time where [data breaches are so common](#) they've almost become background noise. It seems like not a day goes by that one company or another isn't revealing a huge data breach.

Some present different problems than others.

If a credit card is breached you could take steps to monitor your credit. But when your personal information is being leaked then it leaves you more exposed than you would like.

Without knowing the full details of Deep Root's compiling methods it's hard to gauge what could've been done to prevent this from happening. As a general rule you should expect that any information you disclose in any way can be used against you.

It's good to practice limiting the amount of information you reveal to others. Even something as innocent as a voter registration form can be used to gather information about you. So be cognizant of what data about yourself you're giving up freely.



We live at a time where data is king. Knowing this, you can take precautionary measures to protect yourself. The less that is known about you the less you need to worry about whatever the next breach will be.

As a secondary note, I also advise readers to push for answers on Deep Root's practices. Find out where they get the authority to compile their data, who else has this authority, and what steps are being taken to avoid another breach.

It's important to not let this slide until there are some concrete answers to these questions. As always we are in control [to put pressure on companies to respect our data](#).

So speak up now and let your position be known. At least on this matter you don't have to worry about anyone knowing what your beliefs are.

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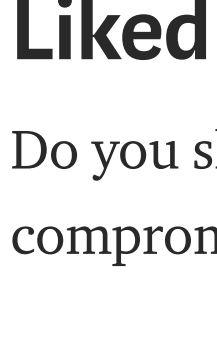
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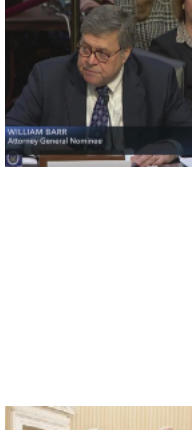
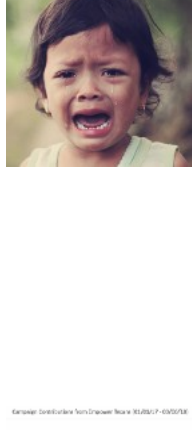



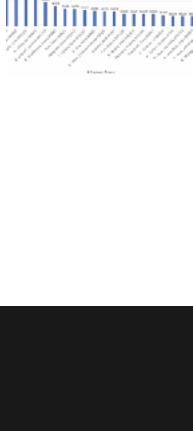


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