

WEDNESDAY: WANDERING

*All that is gold does not glitter; not
all those who wander are lost.*

– excerpt, The Lord of the Rings by J.
R. R. Tolkien

It's a lovely summer day here, cool and dry.
Perfect to go walkabout, which I will do
straight away after this post.

Hackety-hack-hack, Jack

- Spearphishing method used on HRC and DNC revealed by security firm (SecureWorks) – Here's their report, but read this Twitter thread if you don't think you can handle the more detailed version. In short, best practice: DON'T CLICK ON SHORTENED LINKS using services like Bitly, which mask the underlying URL.
- Researchers show speakerless computers can be hacked by listening to fans (arXiv.org) – Air-gapping a computer may not be enough if hackers can listen to fan operation to obtain information. I'll have to check, but this may be the second such study.
- Another massive U.S. voter database breached (Naked

Security) – This time 154 million voters' data exposed, revealing all manner of details. 154M is larger than the number of voters in the 2012 general election, though smaller than the 191M voters' records breached in December. At least this time the database owner slammed the breach shut once they were notified of the hole by researcher Chris Vickery. Nobody's fessed up to owning the database involved in the the December breach yet.

- Speaking of Vickery: Terrorism databased leaked (Reddit) – Thomson-Reuters' database used by governments and banks to identify and monitor terrorism suspects was leaked (left open?) by a third party. Vickery contacted Thomson-Reuters which responded promptly and closed the leak. Maybe some folks need to put Vickery on retainer...
- Different kind of hack: Trump campaign hitting up overseas MPs for cash? Or is he? (Scotsman) – There are reports that Trump's campaign sent fundraising emails received by elected

representatives in the UK and Iceland. Based on what we know now about the spearphishing of HRC and DNC, has anybody thought to do forensics on these emails, especially since government officials are so willing to share them widely? Using these kinds of emails would be a particularly productive method to spearphish government and media at the same time, as well as map relationships. Oh, and sow dissension inside the Trump family, urm, campaign. On the other hand, lack of response from Trump and team suggests it's all Trump.

Makers making, takers taking

- Apple granted a patent to block photo-taking (9to5Mac)
 - The technology relies on detecting infrared signals emitted when cameras are used. There's another use for the technology: content can be triggered to play when infrared signal is detected.
- Government suppressing inventions as military secrets (Bloomberg) – There's merit to this,

preventing development of products which may undermine national security. But like bug bounties, it might be worth paying folks who identify methods to breach security; it's a lot cheaper than an actual breach, and a bargain compared to research detecting the same.

- Google wants to make its own smartphone (Telegraph-UK) – This is an effort apart from development of the modular Ara device, and an odd move after ditching Motorola. Some tech industry folks say this doesn't make sense. IMO, there's one big reason why it'd be worth building a new smartphone from the ground up: security. Google can't buy an existing manufacturer without a security risk.
- Phonemaker ZTE's spanking for Iran sanction violations deferred (Reuters) – This seems kind of odd; U.S. Commerce department agreed to a reprieve if ZTE cooperated with the government. But then think about the issue of security in phone manufacturing and it makes some sense.

A-brisket, a Brexit

- EU health commissioner Andriukaitis' response to Nigel Farage's insulting remarks (European Commission) – Farage prefaced his speech to European Commissioners yesterday by saying "Most of you have never done a proper day's work in your life." Nice way to win friends and influence people, huh? Dr. Vytenis Andriukaitis is kinder than racist wanker Farage deserves.
- Analysis of next couple years post-Brexit (Twitter) – Alex White, Director of Country Analysis at the Economist Intelligence Unit, offers what he says is "a moderate/constructive call" with "Risks definitely to the downside not to the upside." It's very ugly, hate to see what a more extreme view would look like. A pity so many Leave voters will never read him.

Follow-up: Facebook effery

Looks like Facebook's thrown in the towel on users' privacy altogether, opening personal profiles in a way that precludes anonymous browsing. Makes the flip-flop on users' location look even more sketchy. (I can't tell you anymore about this from personal experience

because I gave up on Facebook several years ago.)

Happy hump day!