

collection, which would basically identify the people within the US who had downloaded AQAP's propaganda magazine. One reason I'm so confident NSA does this is because of the high number of FBI sting operations that seem to arise from some 20-year old downloading Inspire, which then appears to get sent out to a local FBI office for further research into online activities and ultimately approaches by a paid informant or undercover officer.

		Hypotheses				Totals
		FFU	
Weights		0.6	0.55	0.52	0.48	
Probabilities	P1	4	2	0	4	5.42
	P2	4	4	0	2	3.08
	P3	4	3	0	4	4.87
	P4	3	4	4	0	3.14

In other words, this kind of analysis seems to lie

at the heart of a lot of the stings FBI initiates.

But as the "Scoreboard" slide in this presentation makes clear, what this process gives you is not validated IDs, but rather probabilistic matches (which FISC appears to deal with using minimization procedures, suggesting they let NSA collect on these probabilistic matches with the understanding they have to treat the data in some certain way if it ends up being a false positive).

That's important not just for the young men whom FBI decides might make worthwhile targets (even if they're being targeted, largely, on their First Amendment activities).

It's important, too, for the false negatives, by far the most important of which I believe to be the Tsarnaev brothers, both of whom reportedly had downloaded multiple episodes of Inspire, as well as other similar jihadist material, and on whom NSA had collected data it never accessed until after the attack, but neither of whom got targeted off this correlation process before they attacked the Boston Marathon.

That is, this really important possible false negative, just as much as the dubious positives that end up getting unbalanced young men targeted by the FBI, may say as much about the reliability of this process as anything else.

This CSE PPT is not yet proof that my suspicions are entirely accurate (though my claims here about correlations are based on officially released documents). But they strongly suggest my suspicions have been correct.

And – particularly given ODNI's refusal to release what appears to be a key opinion describing the terms on which FISC permits the use of these correlations – this ought to elicit far more conversations about how NSA and its Five Eye partners "correlate" identities and how those correlations get used.