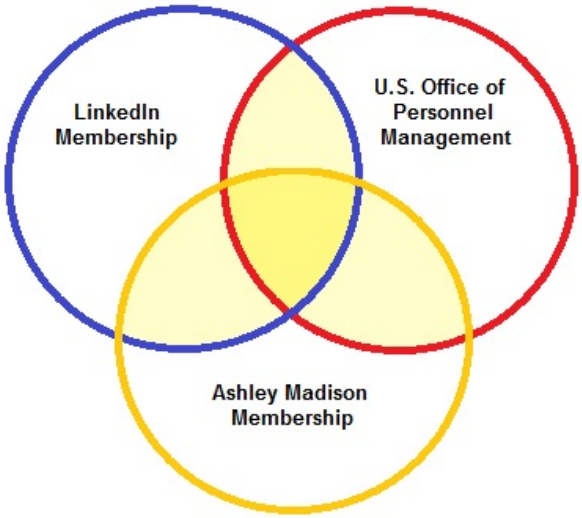
WEDNESDAY: MEND

Repair Day here, can't spend much time reading or writing as I'll be tied up mending things. Enjoy a little mellow Foo Fighters' tune – can't handle metal rock today or I'll end up HULK SMASHing things I'm supposed to fix.

Here's a range of topics which deserve more attention:

• UK's Chilcot report released today (Guardian-UK) – [*Insert lengthy string of epithets here, circa 2003*] I'm sure one of the other team members here at emptywheel will elaborate more effectively on the ugliness in the report and on former Prime Minister Tony Blair's continued ~~lies~~ rationalizations for military intervention in Iraq over alleged 9/11 terrorists and non-existent nuclear weapons. His self-flagellation and tepid mea culpa are pathetic, like watching a wee gnat flailing on an elephant's ass. Thirteen years later, Iraq has become a training ground for terrorists. Self-fulfilling prophecy, much?

The full Chilcot report can be found here. The Guardian is working on a collaborative evaluation of the same.



• Hookup site Ashley Madison under investigation by FTC (Reuters) – Not clear exactly what FTC's focus is, whether they are looking primarily at the data breach or if they are looking into the misleading use of

“fembot” AI to chat up potential customers. Though the article’s characterization of the business as a “discreet dating site” cracks me up, I’m still concerned about the potential risks involved with a breach, especially since other breached data make Ashley Madison’s data more valuable. Like in this Venn diagram; if you were a foreign agent, which breached data would you mine most carefully?

• French Parliament released its inquiry into November terrorist attacks (20 Minutes) – Six months after the attack at the Bataclan and in the streets of Paris, representatives of the Parliamentary inquiry spoke yesterday about the inquiry’s findings:

- Poor cooperation between intelligence functions – In spite of consolidation of General Intelligence and Directorate of Territorial Surveillance under the Central Directorate of Internal Intelligence in 2008 and then the Directorate General of Internal Security (ISB) in 2014, there were gaps in hand-offs between functions.
- Ineffective collection and sharing of prison intelligence – The ISB did not have information from Justice (the prison service) about the relationships between incarcerated radical Islamists nor information about targets’ release from custody.
- Poor cooperation between EU

members and EU system gaps – Fake Syrian passports should have been caught by the EU's Frontex at external borders to EU, and Frontex has no access to data collected by police and intelligence services internal to the EU.
- Gaps in jurisdiction – Not all law enforcement was engaged as they should have been during the November attack, and when engaged, not where they should have been.
- Victims and families treated inadequately – Some families were told they were "ineligible" to be notified of their relatives' deaths. Forensic Institute was swamped by the volume of work. At least one victim tried to call the police; they hung up on the victim because she whispered on the phone.

It's not clear what steps the French will take next to fix these problems identified after looking at 2015's January and November terrorist attacks, though it is reassuring to see a relatively detailed evaluation. Some of the suspects involved in both the November attacks in Paris and in Brussels are still being rounded up and bound over for prosecution; two were handed over by Belgium to France just this week. The full Parliamentary inquiry report will be released next week.

• NHTSA informed by Tesla of self-driving car accident 9 days later (Reuters) – The delay in reporting may have misled investors in advance of Tesla's offer for SolarCity suggest reports, including one by Fortune magazine. To be fair, I don't think all the details about the accident were fully known immediately. Look at the condition of the vehicle in the Reuters' report and the Florida Highway Patrol report; the FHP's sketch of the accident site doesn't automatically lead one to think the accident was induced by distracted driving or by auto-pilot. Can't find the report now, but a DVD player was found much later; it was this device which revealed the driver's last activities. How did the FHP's report make its way to Tesla? And as Tesla responded, with one million auto accidents a year, not every accident is reported to the NHTSA. Begs the question: should all self-driving car accidents be automatically reported to the NHTSA and their automakers, and why?

• 'Zero Days' documentary on Stuxnet out this Friday (Flavorwire) – If director Alex Gibney can make this subject exciting to the average non-technical schmoe, hats off. It's a challenge to make the tedium of coding exciting to non-coders, let alone fluff process control equipment. This is a really important story with a very long tail; hope Gibney was able to do it justice.

EIGHT DAYS in session left in U.S. House of Representatives' July calendar. Hearing about EPA scheduled this morning, but I don't think it had anything to do whatsoever with Flint Water Crisis.

Okay, that's enough to get you over the hump, just don't break anything on the way down. I'm off to go fix stuff.