

Proposal for travel forms to have optional field for online presence info

June 26 2016, by Nancy Owano



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(Tech Xplore)—It's all there: political views, favorite pets; film viewing habits; and much, much more. Social media now holds a garden of information about users and government people evidently feel that for security reasons that information may be quite valuable.

Geek Wire's Kurt Schlosser reported that US Customs proposes asking visitors for [social media](#) identifiers as they travel. Schlosser said, "A proposed change to the forms used by U.S. Customs and Border Protection will ask for details about travelers' 'online [presence](#).'"

The affected forms would be Arrival and Departure Record (Forms I-94 and I-94W) and Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA).

A proposal to revise those forms for arrivals and departures was submitted into the Federal Register on Thursday, June 23.

Homeland Security said the person would be asked to "Please enter [information](#) associated with your [online](#) presence—Provider/Platform—Social media identifier."

Under this proposal, there would be a field in which persons would provide information about their social media accounts, said *The Verge*. "Under the proposed changes, those forms would include a new optional data field prompting visitors to "please enter information associated with your online presence," followed by open fields for specific platforms and screen [names](#)," said *The Verge*.

Who does this proposal apply to?

Russell Brandom in *The Verge*: "The proposal focuses on arrival/departure forms commonly collected from non-citizens at the US border, as well as the electronic form used for anyone entering the country under a visa waiver."

Mario Trujillo in *The Hill* on Friday:

"The change would apply to arrival and departure forms that most foreigners traveling to the United [States](#) without a visa must fill out. The change would also apply to foreign nationals traveling through the visa waiver program," he added. (That was recently updated to bar people from using the expedited program if they recently traveled to certain countries.)

The Federal Register said that these types of forms are filled out by aliens and are used to collect information on citizenship, residency, passport, and contact information. The data elements collected on these forms enable the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to perform its mission related to the screening of alien visitors for potential risks to national security and the determination of admissibility to the United [States](#).

Noteworthy take-homes: It's a proposal. It's an optional data [field](#). The public has some days to comment on the new proposal. Written comments should be received on or before August 22, 2016 to be assured of consideration, said the Federal Register. Mariella Moon in *Engadget* pointed out, it would ask for people's usernames on social media platforms, not their [passwords](#).

The Federal Register:

"U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) of the Department of Homeland Security will be submitting the following information

collection request to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and approval in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act."

More information: [www.federalregister.gov/article ... -i-94w-and#addresses](http://www.federalregister.gov/article-1-94w-and#addresses)

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