

INFORMATION ISSUE PAPER

Office of Field Operations  
National Targeting Center (NTC)  
October 6, 2016

**Action Required:** Information Only

**Time Constraint:** None

**Issue:** Privacy and CRCL groups have opposed CBP's efforts, with the Department, to modify the ESTA application to include the voluntary provision of social media handles. CBP has gone through a 60-day public comment period on its FRN proposing this voluntary provision, met with OMB to discuss and defend this request, added an additional 30-day comment period, and responded in full to all public inquiries about this addition. This final 30-day comment period is over and CBP will meet, with Department representation, with OMB on 6 October 2016 to advocate for the approval of the ESTA social media modification.

**Executive Summary:** Despite incorporating social media into many aspects of its operational mission, CBP aims to further enable and empower its officers, agents, and analysts to further integrate social media throughout their operational functions. (b) (5)

[REDACTED]

: (b) (7)(E), (b) (5)

**Background:**

Social media has become a powerful source of communication and interaction in the past decade and is likely to continue to evolve on a global scale as an integral component of individual identity. Increases in social media usage and connectivity -- as well as in the prevalence of mobile devices and their enabling of near-constant access to social media platforms -- have enabled adversaries to use social media platforms for their recruitment, communications, strategy, and operations threatening national and border security.

- In March 2014, the CBP Deputy Commissioner directed the (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E) (b) (5).
- Subsequent (b) (7)(E) conducted market research, identified a suite of social media tools to support CBP's various functions, (b) (7)(E)

Submitted by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)  
Date: 6 OCT 2016

INFORMATION ISSUE PAPER

- In December 2015, the CBP Deputy Commissioner directed the formation of a CBP-wide working group designed to assess CBP's current social media operational use footprint and prepare a strategy for advancing those capacities in full consideration of legal, privacy, and civil rights and civil liberties equities.

- (b) (5), (b) (7)(E)

**Future Actions:** (b) (5)

, CBP assesses that future developments in the use of social media (b) (7)(E) must be made incrementally and responsibly in the face of extremely complex and difficult technological constraints and legal considerations. (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

and significant legal and privacy considerations must be considered in all future developments.

Subsequently, CBP will continue to test and develop new capabilities (b) (7)(E)

in a deliberate and responsible manner (b) (5), (b) (7)(E)

. To this end, CBP has:

- Prepared a Social Media Strategy (b) (5);
- Worked extensively, both with the Department's Social Media Task Force and independently, to assess the efficacy of industry-leading Commercial-off-the-Shelf tools that claim to support the use of social media (b) (7)(E); and,
- Allocated funds to develop agency-wide training programs on the safe, effective, and legal use of social media in support of CBP's screening/vetting responsibilities and the use of social media in (b) (7)(E).

In FY 17, CBP will:

- Begin to deploy developed training across the agency, to include providing industry-leading advanced training to our most experienced and critical users;
- Develop position descriptions and allocate funds to hire full-time staff from the private sector to support developments in this space;

Submitted by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Date: 6 OCT 2016

INFORMATION ISSUE PAPER

- Execute (b) (7)(E) a series of pilot programs assessing new tools and technology (b) (7)(E);
- Implement lessons learned to date into the workflow of NTC screening/vetting, as appropriate based on technological and legal constraints;
- Begin to make strategic investments in emerging technologies of value in this space;
- (b) (5), (b) (7)(E)

**Watch Out For/If Asked:**

Is CBP currently using social media information to support (b) (7)(E)?

- CBP is working with the DHS Social Media Task Force and DHS Oversight bodies in order to address the specific challenges associated with (b) (7)(E), (b) (5)

Does CBP provide social media training to its officers, agents and analysts?

- In order to further incorporate open source collection and social media information into its various operational missions to the extent allowable by law and technologically feasible, CBP empowers its operators to conduct successful social media research through the establishment of and support for consistent training and education programs.
- CBP currently provides introductory and operational security awareness social media training to any CBP employees who use social media for operational purposes.
- (b) (5)

Is there validity to the claim that a Social Media Center of Excellence will be formed/founded at the NTC?

- CBP is currently participating in the DHS Social Media Task Force chaired by the Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis to support the creation, in a controlled, thorough, and cost efficient manner, of a social media vetting capability for the Department. Social media has become a powerful source of communication and interaction in the past decade and continues to evolve on a global scale. Increases in

Submitted by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Date: 6 OCT 2016

INFORMATION ISSUE PAPER

social media usage and connectivity have enabled adversaries to use social media platforms for their recruitment, communications, strategy, and operations threatening national and border security. The concept of a DHS Social Media Center of Excellence recognizes the need to keep pace with these real world requirements by centralizing DHS's technology capabilities, authorities, and policy decisions, and empower its members – without necessarily requiring a brick and mortar COE in one centralized location.

Submitted by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Date: 6 OCT 2016

USCBP000004

~~Unclassified//For Official Use Only/Law Enforcement Sensitive~~

**U.S. Customs and Border Protection**

**(b) (7)(E)**

**Use of Social Media**

**May 25, 2016**

(U//FOUO) Social media has become a powerful source of communication and interaction in the past decade and is likely to continue to evolve on a global scale as an integral component of individual identity. Increases in social media usage and internet connectivity -- as well as in the prevalence of mobile devices and their enabling of near-constant access to social media platforms -- have created a myriad of new opportunities for national security adversaries or border security threats to use social media platforms for their recruitment, communications, strategy, and operations. As John Carlin, Assistant Attorney General for National Security, said on March 1, 2016, "groups like the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) are using popular social media platforms to propagate and recruit with greater efficiency than ever before... in addition to a prolific presence on media outlets [e.g., Twitter or Facebook]... well-produced propaganda has become a norm when it comes to drawing outsiders to their cause... what we're seeing is a group that's taking advantage of western-made technology." Subsequently, Social Media has become a critical element for vetting travelers by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

(U//FOUO) The collection and screening of social media is (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E) The information provided in social media is critical to screening for imminent and emergent threats to the United States from travelers who are enabled through social media to recruit, plan, and execute terrorist acts via real-time communication platforms. It is critical that social media information be made available to CBP immediately, not several months from now, in order to prevent, disrupt, and dismantle current terrorist plans, rather than react to them after it is too late. It would be unacceptable to the American Public for the Department to miss an opportunity to disrupt a terrorist act when information is readily available to support more robust screening.

(U//FOUO/LES) CBP will conduct (b) (7)(E) social media (b) (7)(E) to screen for indicators that warrant further review by a law enforcement officer. (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E) The reviewing officer will use social media information as a tool for vetting travelers to supplement all other available information, (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

(U//FOUO/LES) During social media screening, there may be instances where it is appropriate and necessary to (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E) to adjudicate a (b) (7)(E) on behalf of the traveler. (b) (7)(E)

~~(Unclassified//For Official Use Only/Law Enforcement Sensitive)~~

~~Unclassified//For Official Use Only/Law Enforcement Sensitive~~

(b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E) Social media will never be the sole source of information used for vetting. (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E) and a case by case basis determination will be made on appropriate enforcement action based on the totality of the circumstances, such as (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E) Similar to current procedures when

(b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E) CBP would only share information on (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E) and law enforcement partners that is necessary to complete the mission. All these efforts add to the layered vetting approach to help ensure process oversight.

(U//FOUO/LES) As mentioned above, (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E) CBP assesses the totality of the circumstances in each case, (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

and an independent determination would be made on each individual case following a thorough vetting. (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

(U//FOUO/LES) There are numerous examples of incidents in which (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E) With the increased number of VWP travelers for the upcoming summer season, it is imperative that the social media collection not be delayed to ensure thorough vetting. (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

~~Unclassified//For Official Use Only/Law Enforcement Sensitive~~

~~Unclassified//For Official Use Only/Law Enforcement Sensitive~~

(U//FOUO) The ability to collect and review social media is not only imperative due to ongoing threats from terrorist organizations, but it is also critical to providing a complete picture of an ESTA applicant. More completely developing this picture leads to numerous (b) (7)(E) benefits, as highlighted above, but also to significant benefits for many travelers as well. For one, collecting social media incorporates into CBP's adjudication process information that would not be otherwise available and can often help resolve identities and clarify information. (b) (7)(E)

[REDACTED]

Therefore, social media serves not only as a vital screening tool and additional selector for vetting, but it also provides the direct benefit to the applicant in entity resolution and application support. In many circumstances, CBP will be unable to meet the statutory requirements of the VWP Act to determine the national security or law enforcement interests of the United States without access to social media information that is collected through the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA). As stated by Secretary Johnson, "Social media can provide the Department with critical information related to the execution of our mission."

~~(Unclassified//For Official Use Only/Law Enforcement Sensitive)~~

~~FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~

**Office of Field Operations**

(b) (7)(C), (b) (7)(E)

**Use of Social Media**

**September 26, 2016**

**Executive Summary:**

(U//FOUO/LES) The Visa Waiver Program (VWP) Improvement and Terrorist Travel Prevention Act (The VWP Act) of 2015 established new travel and dual nationality restrictions for VWP applicants. The restrictions include presence after March 1, 2011 in Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, Libya, Somalia or Yemen and dual nationality with Iran, Iraq, Sudan and Syria. The VWP Act also included a provision that allows the Secretary of Homeland Security to waive VWP ineligibilities created by the VWP Act, if the Secretary determines such a waiver is in the law enforcement or national security interests of the United States. The (b) (7)(E) was created to leverage the additional information being collected under the VWP to (b) (7)(E)

The (b) (7)(E) has developed a process for vetting and research of ESTA applications (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E) currently reviews ESTA applications with (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

Social media and open source information (b) (7)(E) details regarding the applicant that may not available through other sources.

**Social Media Use in the Electronic System for Travel Authorization**

(U) All prospective Visa Waiver Program (VWP) travelers are required to submit biographic identifiers through the online Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) application. ESTA is the primary means of obtaining identifying information to vet against counterterrorism and law enforcement databases for prospective inbound VWP travelers.

(U//FOUO) The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is seeking to add an optional data field requesting social media identifiers (or “handles”) from foreign nationals applying for an ESTA.<sup>1</sup> CBP published a proposed change to the ESTA application and I-94W in the Federal Register to add an optional field for applicants to enter their social media handle and provider/platform. CBP has already responded to public comments from the 60-day comment period and provided an additional 30 days for comments.

**Current Social Media Use:**

<sup>1</sup> It will remain optional, as not every applicant may use social media.

~~FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~



~~FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~

(U//FOUO//LES)

(b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E) vetting may be conducted concurrently and will be used collectively to support an informed decision process. Social media and open source is used in a multitude of ways during the vetting process to (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

As mentioned above, DHS proposed additional changes to the ESTA application to allow the applicant to provide a social media platform (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, etc.) and the related identifier (i.e. username, screen name, handle). These changes are currently in the public comment period.

### Threat Environment

(U//FOUO//LES)

(b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

(U//FOUO//LES) Terrorist groups including the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), al-Qa'ida, and al-Qa'ida's affiliates use social media to disseminate official messaging, recruit potential members, and convince potential supporters to mobilize to violence. (b) (7)(E)

(U//FOUO) DHS is concerned about the thousands of European foreign fighters-as cited in the media. (b) (7)(E)

(U//FOUO) (b) (7)(E)

~~FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~

~~FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~

(b) (7)(E) This information is particularly important to combat a timely, unexpected, and credible threat to public safety.

(U//FOUO) Allowing ESTA applicants to voluntarily share their social media identifiers on their applications (b) (7)(E)

**Applicability to Waiver Authority**

(U//FOUO) Social media serves not only as a vital screening tool (b) (7)(E) but it also provides the direct benefit to the applicant in entity resolution and application support. (b) (7)(E)

(U//FOUO) Collecting social media incorporates into CBP’s adjudication process information that would not be otherwise available and can often help resolve identities and clarify information. (b) (7)(E)

**Social Media Pilot:**

(U//FOUO//LES) Social media screening will be done in two ways, in compliance with DHS and CBP policies and directives regarding social media. Social media platforms and the definition of “derogatory information” are constantly evolving, so specific procedures for every scenario would not be possible. However, in general, (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

- 1) (b) (7)(E)
- 2) (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

~~FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~

~~FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~

(U//FOUO//LES) As it does today, CBP will review the totality of the information available (b) (7)(E) prior to making a determination regarding a person's ESTA application. It is possible that information (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E) If the ESTA is approved or the waiver is granted, the person will be able to travel to the United States under the VWP. If either are denied, the individual must apply for a visa to travel to the United States.<sup>3</sup>

(U//FOUO//LES) (b) (7)(E)  
(b) (7)(E)

(U//FOUO//LES) (b) (7)(E)  
(b) (7)(E)  
○ (b) (7)(E)  
○  
○  
○

(U//FOUO//LES) (b) (7)(E)  
(b) (7)(E)  
○ (b) (7)(E)  
○

**DHS Science and Technology (S&T)**

(U//FOUO//LES) (b) (7)(E) is currently piloting (b) (7)(E) using ESTA application data. (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E)  
(b) (7)(E)  
(E)

<sup>3</sup> The denial of an ESTA does not prohibit travel to or admission into the United States.

~~FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~

~~FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~

(b) (7)(E) (b) (5), (b) (7)(E)

**Future State for Social Media:**

(U//FOUO/LES) (b) (7)(E), (b) (5)  
**(b) (7)(E), (b) (5)**

~~FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~

~~UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~

## Social Media Briefing Paper

### Summary

DHS has been at the forefront among Federal agencies in developing the capability to incorporate social media data in its screening and vetting processes. CBP, along with USCIS and TSA, has been developing, testing, and operationalizing the use of social media.

(b) (7)(E), (b) (5)

Through this work, CBP and the Department more broadly have advanced our understanding of the challenges in screening non-government maintained databases, including the dynamic nature and magnitude of social media information.

(b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

### Current Social Media Pilots/Operational Use

CBP began a social media pilot using ESTA data in early 2016, with the goal of (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

In December 2016, CBP added a voluntary question to the ESTA application to request social media handles, (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

~~UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~

~~UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~

(b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E), (b) (5) CBP is gathering metrics to assess the (b) (7)(E) of social media vetting, as well as the technological and research quality of the tools currently being tested. (b) (7)(E)  
(b) (7)(E)

Also of note:

- Collecting (b) (7)(E) allow opportunities for vetting agencies to determine eligibility for travel or immigration benefits and enhance identity resolution before they are allowed into the United States.
  - The enhanced screening and vetting efforts of DHS will include social media, as outlined in the Executive Order 13780, Section 5 report, which identified “high value data” elements that should be part of baseline screening. (b) (5), (b) (7)(E)
  - (b) (5), (b) (7)(E)
  - (b) (5)
  - DHS Privacy conducted a Privacy Compliance Review following CBP’s collection of social media handles. (b) (5)
- (b) (7)(E), (b) (5) (b) (7)(E), (b) (5)

Watch Out For

- (b) (5)

~~UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~

~~UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~

(b) (5)



~~UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~

INFORMATION ISSUE PAPER

Office of Field Operations  
National Targeting Center (NTC)  
June 2, 2016

**Action Required:** Information Only

**Time Constraint:** None

**Issue:**

CBP currently uses social media information in a limited capacity in support (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E), (b) (5)

**Executive Summary:**

Despite incorporating social media into many aspects of its operational mission, CBP aims to further enable and empower its officers, agents, and analysts to further integrate social media throughout their operational functions. (b) (5)

• (b) (7)(E), (b) (5)

**Background:**

Social media has become a powerful source of communication and interaction in the past decade and is likely to continue to evolve on a global scale as an integral component of individual identity. Increases in social media usage and connectivity – as well as increases in the prevalence of mobile devices and their enabling of near-constant access to social media platforms – have enabled adversaries to use social media platforms for their recruitment, communications, strategy, and operations threatening national and border security.

- In March 2014, the CBP Deputy Commissioner directed the (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E) (b) (5).
- Subsequently, (b) (7)(E) conducted market research to identify a suite of social media tools to support CBP's various functions (b) (7)(E)
- In December 2015, the CBP Deputy Commissioner directed the formation of a CBP-wide working group designed to assess CBP's current social media operational-use footprint

Submitted by: (Name of Originator)

Date: (Date Document was Originated)



INFORMATION ISSUE PAPER

and prepare a strategy for advancing those capacities in full consideration of legal, privacy, and civil rights and civil liberties equities.

- (b) (5), (b) (7)(E)

**Watch Out For/If Asked:**

- Is CBP currently using social media information to support its (b) (7)(E)  
[REDACTED]
  - CBP is working with the DHS Social Media Task and DHS Oversight bodies in order to address the specific challenges associated with (b) (7)(E)  
[REDACTED]
- Does CBP provide social media training to its officers, agents and analysts?
  - In order to further incorporate open source collection and social media information into its various operational missions, to the extent allowable by law and technologically feasible, CBP will empower its operators to conduct successful social media research through the establishment of, and support for, consistent training and education programs.
  - CBP currently provides introductory and operational security awareness social media training to any CBP employees who use social media for operational purposes.
  - (b) (5)  
[REDACTED]

INFORMATION ISSUE PAPER

Office of Field Operations  
National Targeting Center (NTC)  
August 30, 2016

**Action Required:** Information Only

**Time Constraint:** None

**Issue:** CBP currently uses social media information in a limited capacity in support (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

**Executive Summary:** Despite incorporating social media into many aspects of its operational mission, CBP aims to further enable and empower its officers, agents, and analysts to further integrate social media throughout their operational functions. (b) (5)

(b) (5)

: (b) (7)(E), (b) (5)

**Background:**

Social media has become a powerful source of communication and interaction in the past decade and is likely to continue to evolve on a global scale as an integral component of individual identity. Increases in social media usage and connectivity -- as well as in the prevalence of mobile devices and their enabling of near-constant access to social media platforms -- have enabled adversaries to use social media platforms for their recruitment, communications, strategy, and operations threatening national and border security.

- In March 2014, the CBP Deputy Commissioner directed the (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E) (b) (5).
- Subsequent, (b) (7)(E) conducted market research, identified a suite of social media tools to support CBP's various functions, and (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E).
- In December 2015, the CBP Deputy Commissioner directed the formation of a CBP-wide working group designed to assess CBP's current social media operational use footprint and prepare a strategy for advancing those capacities in full consideration of legal, privacy, and civil rights and civil liberties equities.

Submitted by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Date: 30 AUG 2016

INFORMATION ISSUE PAPER

- (b) (5), (b) (7)(E) [REDACTED]

**Watch Out For/If Asked:**

- Is CBP currently using social media information to support its (b) (7)(E) [REDACTED] ?
  - CBP is working with the DHS Social Media Task and DHS Oversight bodies in order to address the specific challenges associated with (b) (7)(E) [REDACTED]
- Is CBP using social media to monitor select individuals?
  - No
- Does CBP provide social media training to its officers, agents and analysts?
  - In order to further incorporate open source collection and social media information into its various operational missions to the extent allowable by law and technologically feasible, CBP empowers its operators to conduct successful social media research through the establishment of and support for consistent training and education programs.
  - CBP currently provides introductory and operational security awareness social media training to any CBP employees who use social media for operational purposes.
  - (b) (5) [REDACTED]

INFORMATION ISSUE PAPER

Office of Field Operations  
National Targeting Center (NTC)  
April 20, 2017

**Action Required:** Information Only

**Time Constraint:** None

**Issue:** CBP currently uses social media information in a limited capacity in support (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

**Executive Summary:** (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E), (b) (5)  
(b) (7)(E), (b) (5)

**Background:**

Social media has become a powerful source of communication and interaction in the past decade and is likely to continue to evolve on a global scale as an integral component of individual identity. Increases in social media usage and connectivity -- as well as in the prevalence of mobile devices and their enabling of near-constant access to social media platforms -- have enabled adversaries to use social media platforms for their recruitment, communications, strategy, and operations threatening national and border security.

- In March 2014, the CBP Deputy Commissioner directed the (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E) (b) (5)
- Subsequently, (b) (7)(E) conducted market research, identified a suite of social media analysis tools to support CBP's various functions, (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E)
- In December 2015, the CBP Deputy Commissioner directed the formation of a CBP-wide working group designed to assess CBP's current social media operational use footprint and prepare a strategy for advancing those capacities in full consideration of legal, privacy, and civil rights and civil liberties equities;
- In January 2016, CBP began to participate in the DHS Social Media Task Force, stood up to assess best practices and technologies for incorporating social media information into Department-wide vetting processes;

- (b) (5)

Submitted by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Date: 20 April 2017

INFORMATION ISSUE PAPER

- (b) (7)(E), (b) (5)
- 
- 

(b) (7)(E)

**Pilot Efforts:**

CBP is working on or preparing for a variety of pilot efforts in this space, including:

- An ongoing pilot with DHS Science and Technology to test the (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E) This pilot has reviewed social media information from approximately 250 ESTA applications to date.

- A pilot utilizing the voluntarily provided social media information collected from the ESTA application;

- (b) (7)(E), (b) (5)
- 

**Watch Out For/If Asked:**

- Is CBP currently using social media information to support its (b) (7)(E) ?
  - CBP is working with the DHS Social Media Task and DHS Oversight bodies, as well as other Inter-Agency Partners in order to address the specific challenges associated with (b) (7)(E).
- Is CBP using social media to monitor select individuals?
  - No
- Does CBP provide social media training to its officers, agents and analysts?

Submitted by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)  
Date: 20 April 2017

INFORMATION ISSUE PAPER

- CBP currently provides introductory and operational security awareness social media training to any CBP employees who use social media for operational purposes.

- (b) (5)

Submitted by: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)  
Date: 20 April 2017

USCBP000022