

Doxing for Personally Identifiable Information: Organizations with Tax-Exempt Status



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Introduction

- Tax Exempt Organizations
- Data gathered from the IRS.gov website¹
- Our starting point:
 - Organization's name
 - EIN
 - city
 - state
 - country
 - deductibility status code²



¹<http://apps.irs.gov/app/eos/forwardToPub78Download.do>

² <http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Exempt-Organizations-Select-Check:-Deductibility-Status-Codes>

Findings

- First Stop: 990s.foundationcenter.org.
 - Address, Website, Mission Statement
 - Officers, Directors, Trustees, Highest Paid Employees
 - Statements of Revenue and Expenses
 - Assets, Public Support Received
- Second Stop: Google's Street View
 - Picture of Headquarters
- Third Stop: Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.
- Etc. ...



Example: Magnolia Speech School for the Deaf

Based on the 2013 tax info and the school website, we were able to find:

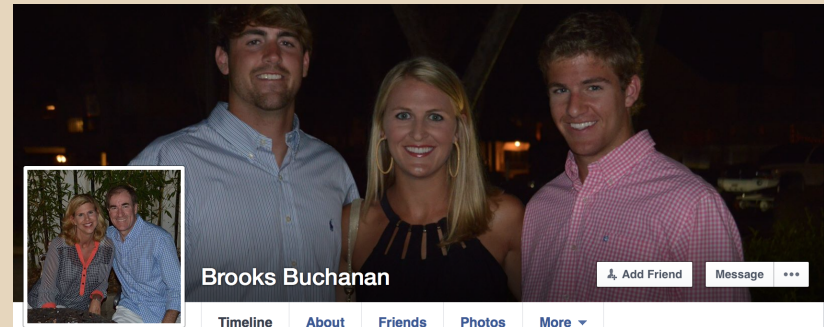
- a new director had been named within the last year;
- many of the employees had Christian faith backgrounds;
- backgrounds of the board of directors and found them on Facebook and LinkedIn;

- A review from a current employee on Glassdoor;

“Pros: Working there gives you a sense of God is there helping the special needs children that come through the school.”

- A YouTube channel with videos of teachers and students at the school;

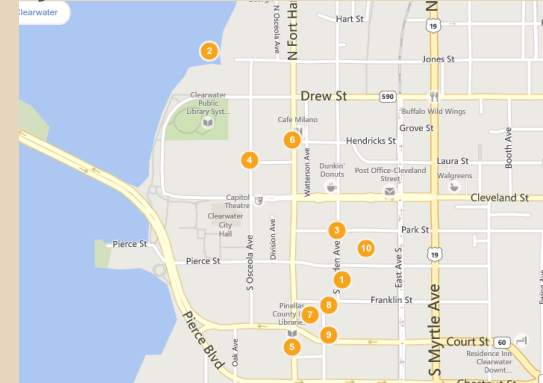
- YouTube videos advertising their annual Clay Shoot fundraising event.



Example: Church of Scientology

Headquartered in Clearwater, FL, the Church of Scientology is a tax-exempt religion.

- From the county's tax appraiser's web site, <http://www.pcpao.org>, the church owns 12 properties in downtown Clearwater
- There are claims that the church has intentionally prevented development and build up the Flag Land Base
- Based on last transaction values, over \$80M in property value
 - *closer to \$100M after accounting for inflation*
- Much of the area around these properties are owned by a handful of property management firms
 - The firms' have very close ties to the church:
 - Ron Pollack, Ben Kugler



Final Thoughts: Very Little Control

- Creepy how far we could go to uncover more and more details
- Imagine what more sophisticated, well-funded groups could do
 - At scale, using machine learning and big data technologies
- Officers, Directors, Trustees put a lot of personal information out there
 - Implicitly making themselves public figures
 - How public do they really want to be?
- Finding circumstantial evidence online
 - Reputational effects: Is there harm?
 - Was this one of the intended uses of the IRS data?
- Should the IRS have disclaimers? At the least:
 - State why they publish the data
 - State the data's intended use

