2 Former Twitter employees charged with spying for Saudi Arabia (Nov 6, 2019)

The DOJ reported in early November that 2 former Twitter employees were spying on users for Saudi Arabia by accessing the company’s information to track down specific individuals. One of the implied schemes was linked to an associate of the crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, who the CIA believes ordered an assassination of a journalist in Istanbul in 2018. The two former twitter employees, Ahmad Abouammo and Ali Alzabarah have been leaking data since 2015 and accumulated information on over 6,000 accounts.

The breach goes to show how much information social media accounts have on each user. Email, address, payment methods and Internet protocol addresses given up voluntarily by each individual when registering for an account. The reason why Twitter is so significant to Saudi Arabia is because “Twitter is the de facto public space of Saudi Arabia — the place where Saudi citizens come and discuss issues. It’s a space in which the Saudi authorities have used various means to curtail critical voices, including by seeking to unmask anonymous accounts.” As stated by Adam Coogle, a human rights watch journalist and researcher.

Links:

(Found article on <https://www.sans.org/newsletters/newsbites/xxi/88>)

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/former-twitter-employees-charged-with-spying-for-saudi-arabia-by-digging-into-the-accounts-of-kingdom-critics/2019/11/06/2e9593da-00a0-11ea-8bab-0fc209e065a8_story.html>

<https://www.theregister.co.uk/2019/11/07/twitter_employees_saudi_spy/>

<https://www.zdnet.com/article/saudi-arabia-allegedly-recruited-former-twitter-employees-to-access-user-data/>