

# Facebook Allowed Democrats to Harvest Its Data to Bolster Their Email List

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Carol Davidsen, the former media director for the Obama campaign in 2012, revealed that Democrats were able to “suck out the entire social graph” or network of friends from individuals on Facebook, which they used to bolster their email lists. Davidsen says that, when Facebook found out, did nothing to stop the process (which they could have done) because they liked what was being done with the names. -GEG

Facebook representatives told Barack Obama’s 2012 campaign that they had been allowed to use the platform in ways that would have otherwise been prohibited, because Facebook was “on our side,” according to explosive claims from Obama’s former director for media analytics, Carol Davidsen.

In a series of tweets, Davidsen that Facebook was “surprised” that the Obama campaign was able to “suck out the entire social graph” (the “social graph” is an individual’s network of friends on Facebook), but did nothing to stop them once they found out.

Davidsen also linked to a talk from 2015 in which she explained how Facebook’s privacy policies in 2012 allowed them to harvest data on friend networks across America.

Davidsen says that this gave the Democrats a massive advantage, as the Republicans did

not gain access to the same data before Facebook shut off the feature.

"The privacy policies on Facebook were ... if they opted in, they could tell us who all their friends were. So they told us who all their friends were...We were actually able to ingest the entire social network of the U.S. that's on Facebook, which is most people."

"Where this gets complicated is that freaks Facebook out. So they shut off the feature."

"The Republicans never built an app to do that. So the data's out there – you can't take it back. The Democrats have this information, so when they look at a voter file and someone comes to them, they can immediately be like 'Oh, here are all the other people that they know, and here are people they can help us persuade, because they're really good friends with that person.'"

"The Republicans do not have that information and will not get that information. I'm a Democrat, so maybe I could argue that's a great thing, but really it's not, in the overall process. That wasn't thought all the way through and now there's a disadvantage of information that to me seems unfair. But I'm not Facebook..."

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