

Travelling to the U.S. with your devices

by Neil Herber

Welcome to the friendly USA ...



What are your “rights”?

- Relatively few
- You can refuse to supply passwords
- Your devices may be examined, copied, or “detained”
- No right to view the device screen during examination
- You can be refused entry - possibly permanently
- By land, they may be able to detain you
- By air there is a question if you can be detained

Recent headlines

- Can Canadian border agents search your phone or laptop- A new guide explains - CTV News
- Canadian Travellers can Expect Phones Searched When Crossing U.S. Border
- Canadians should worry about U.S. border searches of cell phones, electronics- privacy czar - The Globe and Mail
- Leave the phone at home- Privacy commissioner and advocates warn Canadians to keep data secure when crossing the border - The Star
- ...and many more ...

What can be searched?

- Phones
- Laptops
- Tablets
- No cloud services without extra paperwork
- No live data on device
- They can copy the contents of the device or detain it

What could “invade” your privacy?

- Password managers
- Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, and other social media sites
- Browser history
- Call history
- Email
- Contact list
- Text message history

What to do?

- Play the odds (1:17,000)
- Store things in the cloud
- Restore on arrival
- Use “travel” devices
- Have travel accounts for cloud services

What did I do?

- Went to conference in Las Vegas in Oct 2018
- Flew through Toronto with preclearance there
- I removed password manager, twitter client (no other soc med)
- Switched to travel cloud accounts
- Always have browsers set to retain NO history
- Did not worry about call or text history, but could have saved and restored
- Was essentially waved through

Conclusions?

- Was a pain restoring stuff on arrival at destination
- Closed my Twitter account on return
- Was not concerned about search on return, but Canada can and does do the same
- Links to all the headlines will be posted on the message board