

Diaspora (D*) Social Network (July 7th, 2014 Review)
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To be very clear, this is my experience, my opinions and I am providing information which I feel is largely and perhaps intentionally neglected from being discussed both outside of the microcosm that is the [Diaspora social network](#) as well as the [FOSS](#) community as a whole. *This includes both historical references w/ embedded hyperlinks within this document as well as links to references to [clearly show](#) my personal [recent experience](#) in [attempting to use Diaspora's Social Network](#) for both [connecting](#) as an [artist](#) and promoting a good cause I connected with on Twitter.

Additionally, my supporting argument for lack of community awareness / attention to this ongoing issue with Diaspora's network as recently as early July 2014 as is, may be found by in part by lack of comments & responses by said Linux / FOSS community attempts to discuss the issue on [well known, respected & trusted forums referenced here](#). Attempts are made, No one is apparently willing to really officially address this issue yet.

Additionally at this time, i've had no response from the Former Diaspora Pod Representative Sean Tilley, whom I under 'p1x3l_f15h' last year there questioned publicly which revealed the use of AWS servers for the largest pod on the network... Along with several valid safety / security concerns i'll outline further in this doc.

Diaspora: Risk Assessment End-User / Network Study Purpose:

The sole purpose of this document is to inform and to raise awareness re: the project, current status of community, efforts, official responses to abuse on the network. I also hope to help repair any damage I may have done to ANYONE who visited my recent last attempt to use Diaspora. Malicious links and harmful / hateful content was daily publicly posted on my profile page in comment form by several users in a system that cannot block it from happening without potentially removing their voice entirely from the network. ie. **Absolute Censorship**.

This being the [only remedy in use & desired by the community](#) at [DiasporaHQ](#) & Subsequently every other [Diaspora pod](#), was publicly stated by the project leaders under Eben Moglen's oversight on July 5th, 2014. Additional continued abuse by users on my public page (ie. Posting hateful anti-Semitic / Racist / Homophobic & Malicious URL content) [forced my removal of said account](#) on July 6th, 2014.

I had unfortunately connected to my twitter account where I help [charities](#), artists, and anyone else however I can to my [now closed Diaspora Social Network profile](#). *Had I been aware of the issues plaguing the project as of July, 2014, **I would have never in good faith suggested anyone connected to me use it in hindsight.**

*Also To Note: At present, **Columbia Law School's [Eben Moglen](#) uses FSSN and the [Software Freedom Law Center](#) as an umbrella organization to Diaspora development and manages Diaspora's [branding](#), [finances](#) and [legal assets](#).** So far, I've received no word that he is willing to publicly speak to any of these matters, despite a request made via email.

Diaspora: History Of The Project:

Wikipedia Entry (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diaspora_%28social_network%29)

Diaspora Foundation (*Main Site) (<https://diasporafoundation.org/>)

Kickstarter Campaign (*Netting \$200K+ In 2010 Starting It All)

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/mbs348/diaspora-the-personally-controlled-do-it-all-distr>

*Campaign Started By '[Maxwell Salzberg](#)' Bio / Project History From His [Kickstarter Profile](#):

“Four [NYU computer science](#) students who bonded over many late nights building a [Makerbot](#) at [ACM](#) meetings. After being inspired by a talk by [Eben Moglen](#) about [freedom](#) and [ownership online](#), we started discussing what a [distributed social network](#) would look like, but coders like us can never just talk—so we started building.”

Diaspora: History Of Usage By Myself

2011 – First Use. Created Account, Don't even think I logged in again.

2012 – Tried it again, no one I knew was there, seemed buggy, left.. closed account.

2013 – Created an account under the moniker 'p1x3l_f15h' and met lots of cool people, really enjoyed myself & was very supportive overall of project. I noticed [EXIF Data](#) was not being stripped by Diaspora Pod build software as of then & asked why. Directed question to Sean Tilley, who was assisting in daily operations in part for JoinDiaspora.com. Results were shocking.

Activist / Extremists including those who would intend emotional, physical or cyber online harm or advocate such behavior were in plain text / publicly both praising Diaspora for having given them a voice, while at the same time posting pics of demonstrations and illegal activities around the world, in plain sight, publicly, with GPS LOCATION INFO for any all governments & law enforcement to track, monitor, apprehend and otherwise target. Additionally on the other side of this reality is the potential for the opposite side of this to also exploit anyone who disagrees with them through the same methods outlined above.

So, people perhaps naturally immediately jumped my shit about making the info public there and elsewhere so I followed suit. I was pissed, not because I was doing anything wrong or wanted to, but because I could see thousands of 'activists' around the world clearly exposing their plans publicly, in plain sight while simultaneously telling themselves and each other every day that somehow their privacy and free speech didn't have consequences and is somehow 'protected'.

Truthfully, I feel like I was an asshole about it in how I responded in large part. Nonetheless, [here it is](#).

In said conversation which was public on the Diaspora Social Network, I asked if any pods then were on Corporate Servers. Sean responded publicly stating yes, in fact there was usage of Amazon Web Services (AWS) for JoinDiaspora's pod which was and still is the largest Pod on the entire otherwise 'decentralized' and mostly volunteer based network of pods running the Diaspora Server Software all around the world.

As of recently, I was again informed that JoinDiaspora uses AWS services to this day.
I can neither confirm nor deny that to be true
(ie. Please [Contact Them For Confirmation & Clarification](#)).

Additionally I cannot provide any additional information on any aspect to what information is housed there, if encrypted or plain text and if it remains the case that ALL USER ACCOUNT DATA is still stored on said American Corporate Servers as was the case per Mr. Sean Tilley in Summer of 2013. *Also to note level of encryption if asked of them should be included ;-P

2014 – I return to Diaspora. I felt badly how I left, People were freaking the hell out, it all of a sudden became about AWS, Corporate Pod Use, The Network & Everything but cool music or street art I went there to share. That bummed me out lots.

Upon returning, I still find 'activists' using the network in plain text, no use of encryption and snubbing their noses at my simple suggestion of using already well known technologies such as [Steganography](#) if they 'really were worried about continued AWS use on JoinDiaspora or any other pod for that matter. I pointed out how posting a simple image could contain encrypted information (again) for anyone to have free speech regardless of any law enforcement, corporate oversight or corporate pod use and literally, people were confused & didn't get it there.

So, I felt the AWS issue was 'old news' since it had been made public to a point where crazy people were acting like some kind of revolutionaries on Diaspora following this revelation sparked by Sean & I last year... Admittedly I feel responsible for it and that sucks.

I really didn't want anything to do with trying to be an activist, or loud voice there. That is not what I came there for. Not then, not this last recent & most final attempt which prompted this document & need to do / say something about what actually happened and is still right now happening there without any signs of anyone trying to make it safer or function better as a platform for true, actual free speech. *Which was it's original intention

I posted during late June / Early July on my [DeviantART](#) page, my [Twitter Profile](#), My Official '[Gravatar](#)' home, that I was going to use Diaspora for posting information which was either a.) Too long to tweet. b.) Animated Gif. c.) Or any other function of said site use which was an obvious benefit to having simply used pastebin w/ raw embed links [as I had been doing before](#) on said sites / [current projects](#) online.

I figured, hey... Let's try this again right? I'm a 'digital adventurer'
& I also want to atone & attempt to grow as a person, see if somehow
I can do something positive, bring something to help Diaspora
be what I saw it could be, wasn't, and still obviously isn't.

This is how it went: I met lots of cool people, saw great photography, met other awesome music fans, cool nerds, cat people, dog people, bird people, awesome people. Loved it.

Then, started getting trolled with abuse & spam by one user who was trolling a facebook emotion manipulation study post I had raised concerns with, and tried to turn it into an AWS Amazon Web Service rant / conversation.

I tried, tried again, and tried & failed again to reach this man. He then began posting on my public page linked to my presence online where I link to musicians, artists, recording labels, charities and good people... A URL to his own server.

That's when I lost it. I kept 'ignoring him' through Diaspora's 'Ignore' feature. All it did was stop his posts from appearing in my stream, as well as stop alerting me to him having commented on my public page which I then had to scan everything I had EVER posted there to remove his malicious content & links from. It absolutely ruined my experience there & made it UNSAFE for me to direct people I care about to.

When I raised this question to Diaspora. First, end users insulted my intelligence. I was criticized immediately, publicly for using Diaspora itself to contact HQ and the pod Diasp.eu I had my page hosted at. I was also targeted because I also used Twitter to contact them through their official accounts there with a link to the post I had raised this 'abuse ability / concern issue' on, and was told that because I didn't do it on [GitHub](#), no one would listen and I was a spammer. Um, OK. Took me 5 minutes to just find a 2012 Known Bug [Here](#) contrary to response I got from JoinDiaspora even though Software / FOSS / Linux community knows it's broken.

I discontinued use of that post and clearly stated I would wait for an official public response from either DiasporaHQ or Diasp.eu. Which happened within a few hours publicly, informing me there was no way to block abuse, all I could do is use the 'report user' function and they would be censored or reprimanded by the individual podmin of whatever hosted their particular page/account on the decentralized network.

[I responded with my thought](#). OK, I'll continue to delete comments by him or any abuser. I will not report them because I worry they will be censored and that is contrary to my belief in freedom of speech, especially on Diaspora given it's 'model' and 'motto'.

I was then [essentially insulted](#) publicly for having reshared and liked and commented on reshared posts on my public page which I had all along stated I was doing so others outside of the network could see how Diaspora 'Could Work' for them as an artist, org, etc.

Additionally, My concern was completely ignored. I was dismissed entirely by Diaspora under Eben Moglen's legal, public, powerful direction for having raised this concern in the first place. That concerns me a lot. Here's WHY.

#1.) Diaspora is not safe, meant to be safe or desires to work towards being safer for end users and anyone viewing public profile pages there. This in part is beautiful in terms of free speech, the ugly reality though is that it's being used to track, monitor, use and abuse people on all sides of all equations trying to use that network. It's literally a digital wasteland of old ideas, rhetoric, wanna' be self proclaimed activists posting the same tired speech from Anonymous and every other side online.

#2.) Diaspora is at the same time being given the credibility by well known people such as Richard Stallman and Eben Moglen. Unlike Stallman however, Mr. Moglen does have a legal responsibility for his part in the Diaspora Foundation on a whole. If continued use of that network results in litigation, arrest, seizure, forfeiture of rights / property, liberty or in the worst case scenario, 'life' by those who mistakenly use the network for a voice thinking they are somehow untouchable from law enforcement and terrorists alike where they live, anywhere on earth, I personally wouldn't want that blood on my hands, nor would I want that legal battle being pursued by any party who's ever used Diaspora or continues to as is without further legal modification or provisions made by his authorized representatives at JoinDiaspora.com and in conjunction with the Diaspora Foundation as well.

#3.) If such aggregated data through varying yet mostly simple techniques with online software were made public, personal info on Diaspora network users, links to their Facebook accounts (Oh, the irony), Twitter handles, LinkedIn Profiles, Loved Ones, GPS Data location from EXIF data on any of their otherwise unbeknownst to them public *Easily linkable profiles were released, would Mr. Moglen praise the responsible parties for making that public as he is an Edward Snowden Advocate?

If anyone was harmed, just like with Snowden's release, if it compromised either any law enforcement entity or official, government organization, or large corporation such as the GMO companies who use Diaspora to monitor activists under accounts resharing & 'agreeing' with those posting their location data over the web, publicly. And then threaten harm to companies, American Troops, Dissidents and their own kin alike.... Is this OK with Mr. Moglen? Is this the vision for the network he legally sponsors?

I don't raise these issues / questions lightly. Nor do I intend to share any personal info or any other insights about practices used @ Diaspora. It's not my concern. I just needed to post this because I had unfortunately sent unknowing people there recently. [I feel responsible.](#)

If you'd like to criticize me for raising these concerns feel free to do so publicly on Twitter. I won't email, DM or otherwise accept contact from anyone regarding this topic EVER, UNLESS IT'S DONE 100% IN THE OPEN USING TWITTER'S FREE SPEECH PLATFORM.

Should you care to simply dismiss me as a n00b, well, ok.

I began in 1983 in BASIC with a TI. Since then i've used, assisted with, maintained systems of just about every OS under the sun both current and former in some way shape or form. I don't consider myself to be anything other than a curious end-user who's been at it for a long time. I'm a musician, artist to be clear, not a programmer.

I've worked alongside programmers, managed projects, helped people achieve great things both big and small for a long time. I care about my efforts being used positively.

Please, use this info to somehow grow, not continue to silence & spread little more than ignorance to the platform, community & FOSS / LINUX Social Networking as a whole.

Thank You. ~ [L4C0F](#)

(Monday, July 7th 2014)

<https://twitter.com/joindiaspora>

<https://twitter.com/linuxfoundation>

<https://twitter.com/ColumbiaLaw>

<https://twitter.com/EFF>

<https://twitter.com/wikileaks>

<https://twitter.com/awscloud>

<https://twitter.com/DeadSuperHero>

<https://twitter.com/maxwellsalz>

July 9th, 2014 Update: [So far all 4 parties contacted have completely refused comment.](#)

The only 'representative' who made effort was Mr. Sean Tilly who confronted this report and [blamed me for harming the project, after denying a HS Kid any response](#) 2 days after I pointed out the harm he, the project & [Eben Moglen](#) are causing & allowing both state and foreign domestic terrorist activity to continue completely unchecked, unsupervised, with Public Non-Profit funding which is legally protected by US LAW and under the guise / behalf of [Columbia Law School](#)'s otherwise great reputation.

I've since [stopped creating all art in protest](#) of this lack of illegal activity continuing.

[I have also forwarded a copy of this document](#) to the
[US Department Of Homeland Security](#) due to my further

Legal & National Security Concerns which may stop harm to others online from continued use of Diaspora's social network. *Especially for minors as they refuse to post any information for parents or kids online warning them.

