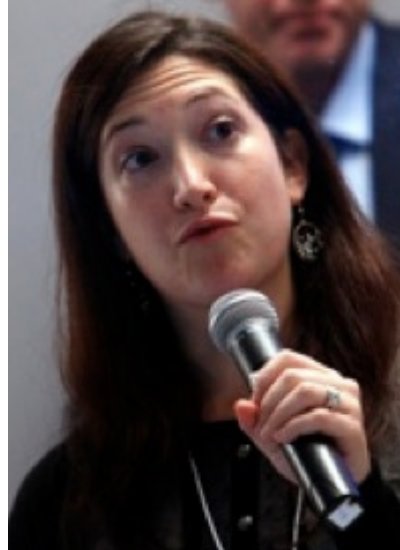




Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on August 1, 2011

## After Bilderberg Meeting, Facebook Official Says End Internet Anonymity

In addition to being the director of marketing for the social media icon, Zuckerberg is the sister of Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg. The siblings attended the Bilderberg conference where Mark Zuckerberg delivered a key address. Many of the Internet's elites were present for the annual secret confab held this year in St. Moritz, Switzerland. According to an [exposé](#) by *The New American's* own Alex Newman, many such luminaries were on hand at the conference:



More than two dozen prominent members of the American elite attended, too. An especially interesting cadre at the 2011 event included some of the masters of the Internet world: the co-founder of Facebook; the executive chairman of Google; the co-founder and executive chairman of LinkedIn; the founder and CEO of Amazon.com; the commander of the American military's "cyber command" (or USCYBERCOM); Microsoft's chief research and strategy officer; and others.

During a [panel discussion](#) sponsored by the magazine *Marie Claire*, Ms. Zuckerberg addressed the issue of the proliferation of cyberbullying and opined that people would be less inclined to harass others online if the veil of anonymity were removed and all people were required to use their real names.

Facebook already tries to implement this "protection" by requiring members to register using their real names and verifiable email addresses. However, anyone who regularly uses the site knows that the openness policy hasn't prevented the proliferation of pseudonyms and fake



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identities (including a recent profile created in the name of “Diana, Princess of Wales”).

Ms. Zuckerberg insists, however, that removing facades is the only sure way to establish peace on the web:

I think anonymity on the Internet has to go away. People behave a lot better when they have their real names down.... I think people hide behind anonymity and they feel like they can say whatever they want behind closed doors.

The Facebook founding family isn't the only faction of Internet aristocracy calling for the obliteration of namelessness on the net. Former Google CEO Eric Schmidt made the same [recommendation](#), describing anonymity as “dangerous” and practically calling upon the governments of the world to “[demand](#)” that citizens of their respective nations cease the practice of employing usernames and identities beyond their own real names.

Expectedly, there is significant opposition to the Facebook and Google combined campaign to abolish anonymity. Privacy and free speech advocates insist that mandating the use of real-life identities on the Internet would have a chilling effect on opposition both to oppression and to the exposure of victims of crime to additional targeting by those determined to threaten them.

Matthew Ingram of [GigaOM](#), a San Francisco-based blog, recently wrote that, “Many people believe that requiring real names will solve the problems of trolls and bad behavior, but they don't — and that policy can have negative consequences in terms of suppressing dialogue about important topics.”

At the *Marie Claire* symposium, Ms. Zuckerberg was challenged by attendees as to how Facebook and other foes of



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anonymity would go about boosting security on social media sites so as to protect the innocent. Zuckerberg assured the audience that such steps would be taken, but refused to provide particulars of the policy.

“There’s so much more we can do,” she said. “We’re actively trying to work with partners like Common Sense Media and our safety advisory committee.”

Stories of serious breaches of security and malicious manipulation of identity by online malefactors are common. One such account was described in a recent [article](#) published by the Huffington Post:

Erin Andrews, an ESPN anchor who had a naked video of her posted online by a stalker, joined Zuckerberg as a panelist and addressed her struggles to have the illegally-obtained video removed from the web. She became emotional at points during the conversation and described her frustration working Google and other companies that declined to pull the video from the websites hosting it.

Andrews praised Google for its “remarkable” contribution to the campaign against bullying titled “It gets better,” but noted she also found it inconsistent: Google searches for her name still turn up the images and videos posted by her stalker, even as the search giant professes to be taking a stand against online harassment.

“So when does it get better? I’m confused,” said Andrews, who suggested that her situation may have been viewed differently because it involves a “woman in her 30s.” “It’s still cyberbullying. Somebody needs to step in. As a family we’re always asking, what is it going to take?”

The implementation of such policies by the



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owners and providers of social media platforms is not nefarious per se, as businesses should maintain the right to set and administer policies for participation on the web presences they own. The more frightening specter, however, that seems to accompany such decisions is that government adoption of the practices and the requirement of such exposure typically follows in the wake of the industry advocacy of such procedures.

Constitutionalists warn that government perpetuates itself by expanding its power. The accumulation of data revealing the vital statistics and habits of citizens is a critical step toward establishment of a surveillance state whose never-blinking eye will record every movement of innocent and guilty alike, storing that information for a time when the recollection of it would best serve the tyrannical interests of the state.

For now, the popularity of social networking cedes to its purveyors a potency that affords them great sway over the legislators of the United States and the world, as is evident by the invitation of them to influential meetings such as the controversial Bilderberg Conference. It will behoove all those dedicated to preserving the privacy of the people, as well as to enforcing the restrictions on government action as contemplated by the enumeration of a few, specific powers in the Constitution, to watch vigilantly for implementation of new standards of openness, particularly when the sword of state is wielded in their enforcement.

*Photo of Randi Zuckerberg: AP Images*



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