# UK tourists to US face increased social media scrutiny at borders



UK tourists travelling to the United States may face increased scrutiny of their mobile phones and social media accounts under a newly confirmed policy by the US government. The Trump administration has implemented measures allowing US border officials to review travellers' social media profiles as part of immigration and customs checks, a move that has prompted urgent warnings for those planning to visit the country.

Reports from multiple sources, including Extra.ie and the Birmingham Mail, indicate that UK nationals, as well as other travellers, have experienced what has been described as “aggressive questioning” by US border patrol agents. This has particularly been noted at Dublin Airport, a key transit point for flights to the United States. According to Patti Shields, chair of Democrats Abroad, several frequent travellers have encountered firm interrogation by US officials at Dublin in recent weeks. Speaking to Extra.ie, Shields shared: “I know two very frequent travellers who received a kind of aggressive scolding and questioning from US officials in Dublin over the past couple of weeks.” She added that US expats are exchanging advice on how best to handle immigration, with some recommending that travellers avoid bringing devices containing social media accounts to reduce the likelihood of close inspections.

US immigration authorities have confirmed that social media accounts may be accessed during entry screening in certain cases. The review of online profiles forms part of a broader effort to assess the backgrounds and activities of incoming visitors. Visa applications and residence permits could be refused if information surfaced during these checks raises concerns. Brian Honan, CEO of BH Consulting, emphasised the legal authority of border agents in such matters, telling the Birmingham Mail: “Border agents in many countries do have the legal authority to search your devices. So, if they do find material that is illegal or offensive, it could mean you are either detained or refused entry.”

Despite the authority granted to border agents, some experts question the practical implementation of the policy. Ronan Murphy, chair of cybersecurity firm SmartTech247, commented on the challenges inherent in screening devices at scale: “The level of sophistication required to filter out specific individuals, and the time and capacity needed to search every device, makes it seem not overly realistic to me.”

For travellers concerned about privacy and the potential for device searches, advice has emerged suggesting the use of temporary or secondary devices when travelling to the US. This approach aims to minimise exposure of personal information on frequently used phones or laptops.

The Birmingham Mail is reporting that the introduction of social media screening at US borders is reshaping travel preparations for many UK tourists and others heading to America, particularly in airports such as Dublin where transatlantic flights are common. The increased scrutiny reflects broader US immigration policies focused on digital background checks alongside traditional border security measures.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://kpmg.com/xx/en/our-insights/gms-flash-alert/flash-alert-2025-063.html> - This URL supports claims about increased scrutiny of travelers' devices and social media by US Customs and Border Protection as part of enhanced vetting procedures. It also mentions President Trump's Executive Order aimed at improving national security screening.
* <https://www.boundless.com/blog/government-monitoring-of-immigrants-social-media/> - This source corroborates the US government's efforts to monitor social media as part of its immigration screening process. It details plans to collect social media handles from immigrants applying for various benefits.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/donald-trump-department-of-homeland-security-barack-obama-san-francisco-social-media-b2724045.html> - This article discusses the historical context and expansion of social media monitoring by immigration officials, dating back to the Obama administration and continuing under the Trump administration.
* <https://tandslaw.com/state-department-sends-cable-to-consulates-requiring-social-media-review-of-all-f-m-and-j-visa-applicants/> - It highlights the State Department's instructions to consular officers for enhanced social media vetting of student visa applicants, reflecting the broader shift towards digital scrutiny in immigration processes.
* <https://knightcolumbia.org/blog/why-is-the-us-still-probing-foreign-visitors-social-media-accounts> - This source examines the expansion of social media surveillance for visa applicants, originally implemented under Trump and continued under subsequent administrations, raising concerns about civil liberties.