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by ASRAR AZIM

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According to the case study, Facebook's most popular application that works on a data-driven business model. While the service is marketed as free to the users, the actual price is the personal data users offer. During the account creation process, Facebook captures user information, including personal details, hobbies, interests and activity. Facebook primarily sells targeted advertising to businesses. The data we provide is analyzed and used mainly for this purpose.

In this case, the Italian Competition Authority found that Facebook did not adequately inform users at the time of registration that their personal data would be collected and used for commercial purposes. Accordingly, the application invoices large-scale data harvesting, user profiling and personalized ads. Users did not receive information about the monetization of their data in a clear or timely manner. Users were also not clearly informed that using the service depended on accepting that they would monetize their data. Similar applications are available in other social media and digital platforms. Google, Instagram, TikTok and Twitter (now X) all use user data to support their advertising-based business models. According to Zuboff's (2019) research on surveillance capitalism, human experience and actions are treated as resources to manufacture profit. Acquisti, Taylor, and Wagman (2016) further emphasize on how personal and sensitive information is exchanged for digital goods/services, often without user's knowledge or consent.³

Informed consent is the primary ethical issue in this particular situation. Users were not clear that their personal data was what they paid for the service. Dissimilarities in regulatory approaches will lead to negative marketing. The absence of understandable information on data usage restricts users from making choices. Another ethical issue is deception. Websites use the detailed user profiles they build up to influence everything from how users behave to their opinions or even their political views. It raises a power imbalance concern where companies know much more about users compared to users knowing about companies. Numerous articles address comparable ethical issues. As an example, O'Neil (2016) indicates that those opaque data systems can hurt people without much accountability. Similarly, Floridi and others (2018) discusses how the misuse of personal data undermines people's trust in digital technology and democratic institutions.

If data-driven applications continue to operate without strong regulation anywhere in the world, society will face serious long-term consequences. As data gathering becomes the new norm, privacy will lose its value. The implications could lead to more surveillance, less freedom of

expression and more social control of the private companies. The risk of rising inequality is also likely. The individuals who know the data practices protect themselves; the rest expose themselves. Public acceptance of technology is unpredictable and might shift in the future. Hence, the government might tighten the regulations. To some scholars, if these platforms were introduced with regulation and transparency, they may yet yield social and economic benefits. According to Voigt & von dem Bussche (2017), the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is often judged to be a step in the right direction for balancing innovation and user rights.¹²

The Facebook case illustrates how present-day digital platforms are highly data-driven and do not respect user rights to the fullest. If ethical concerns are left neglected, they may shape a future wherein our privacy and independence shall be reduced. For long-term protection of society, it is essential to have effective laws and good communication while designing any solutions.

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