

Alan Macklin

Professor Yue

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Personal Control and the World We Live In

You should be prepared for the fact that there are parts of your life on the internet, regardless of how favorable they show you or what their purpose. In this day in age, private information is something that most people want, but we also want to look cool to friends, family, etc. This makes me question why the misuse of memes baffles me. The spread and misuse of memes is bad practice and a breach of general ethics; however I find it silly that there are so many more important matters to worry about than the misuse of a meme. You can not let your public image of people who have never met you impact you negatively, it is simply best to ignore it and stick to the people close to you or people who don't let your misused meme bother them.

Privacy is something that a lot of people want, but in my opinion is impossible to get. Privacy can come in many forms, but one thing that most people agree on is that their personal information should not be accessible (Bélanger 1020). I personally think that personal information will only be private in an ideal world. The real world however, people chose to post memes and the like for whatever reason, and now information about you is on the internet. It may not be much, be it just a username and a meme, but that information can and probably will be connected with other things that that account posts. It is also almost inevitable that the information about you gathered there will be connected to other accounts, be it because they share the same username, or just close observation. There is no doubt that privacy is important, but it is also practically impossible.

Since this is a world where simply posting something at all can be informative, one should be careful of what you post about yourself, and don't be concerned about how other people use what you post. In Ephesians 4:29, the Bible says "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but

only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen,” which in the case of you being on a meme, when you post a meme about yourself, make sure that it is all in good fun. Once you have accomplished your christian duties of being a good person on how you make a meme about yourself, all that’s left is simply to ignore what other people do with the meme you made of yourself. You may not be able to have complete ignorance of how your meme is used but you can not let other peoples actions bother you when you are not likely to ever meet them.

In the case that you have no choice and a meme with you in it finds it’s way to the internet, then you still should not let it bother you, partially because you don’t have to concern yourself with what is clearly a misuse of technology according to the ACM code of ethics section 1.6, where you are to respect peoples privacy with technology. Sure it sucks that your face is on the internet, but very few will know your name and are unlikely to ever meet you. Just don’t let it bother you and move on.

While there are many different contexts that a meme can have, and various level of consent to post them on the internet, the reality is that nothing is truly private. If privacy was guaranteed it would not be such a big deal, so live with the fact that other peoples image of you will be based on what is on the internet, at least partially. You must be prepared for the worst when a meme about you is posted regardless of whether or not it was posted with your consent. Really, memes are supposed to be all in good fun, if a meme with you in it does not portray you the way you want it to, that says more about the person who made that version of your meme and not you. In my opinion you must be prepared to accept that in an age where so much information can be found and used. How your meme is used does not reflect you, it reflects those that use it.

Works cited

“The Code Affirms an Obligation of Computing Professionals to Use Their Skills for the Benefit of Society.” *Code of Ethics*, <https://www.acm.org/code-of-ethics>.

Given bible quote from assignment:

Bélanger, France, and Robert E. Crossler. “Privacy in the Digital Age: A Review of Information Privacy Research in Information Systems.” *MIS Quarterly*, vol. 35, no. 4, 2011, pp. 1017–41. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/41409971>. Accessed 2 May 2023.