Gabriel Padis

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Paris, 75015, France

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Sundar Pichai

CEO

Google

1600 Amphitheatre Parkway

Mountain View, 94043, California, United States

Dear Sundar Pichai,

I am Gabriel Padis, a French Student in Engineering, specialising in Cyber-Security. I am writing this letter to discuss with you the future of personal security and the role that you and Google have now and will continue to have. We don't know what the future may hold but we have to think of it already to make the right decisions then.

Right now, Google has, as an internet business, the strong responsibility to protect its users and their data. By its size and influence it has in the life of millions of people, and it is one of the primary actors in today’s internet world.

But by allowing the American government to have a backdoor in Google’s system, in order to access the user’s data at any time, Google betrayed the trust of its users and violated the Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights : “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.”. Privacy is a human right. But different organisations want to have a total control on people’s data. And it took a whistleblower, Edward Snowden, to let the people know what was happening.

Then, Google did a great job to protect and encrypt user data, even at the risk of angering government authorities. But it shouldn’t stop there. There is more to do to make the world a better place, by protecting the people. By doing so, we ensure that it will have a positive impact in the years to come. Aiming for the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people is the right thing to do.

We need to make sure we don’t create a world where the government can spy on anyone or even just create a system to control everyone at any time. The British government once stated : “You have nothing to fear if you have nothing to hide” but this is a flawed reasoning, people can and should be able to have private life and actions without being observed. In order to have a democratic country everyone should be able to express themselves and to have a life on the internet without being tracked at every corner. It would be like living your life constantly being watched over by a policeman. No one wants such a life.

But at the moment, the Chinese government is creating a whole system to track everyone’s transactions, travels, meetings, friendships, … and it gives to everyone a “citizen score”, giving you access to different and specific things depending on that score. You can be forbidden loans, travels and more. This control creates a world where not everybody is equal and have the same rights.

And this is a huge problem. Surveillance come with control and regulation, which can have important consequences on the evolution of the population. It changes the possible outcomes of what free speech is allowing and it weakens the development of good opportunities for the future of the world.

Big technology related companies have the power to allow or deny those kinds of technological development. They are responsible for it. Company can refuse to work with governments or to make changes that would endanger user’s data.

In the future what citizen except is more security and privacy for the users even though technology advances organisations will try to seize personal data. Google needs to be at the edge of modern technology developments in order to develop and lead the way in cryptography and system security so it stays ahead of anyone wanting to access this data without authorization.

There has been an awakening of a social conscience about how we are treated. And expectations are being formed for the future. There is a need for Google and other companies to set standards of practises around the use of data. People should be able to know what is being known about them and have the possibility to manage this data freely, and even remove it and being certain of it.

Security is necessary and welcome to protect the world population, but is should never be in spite of privacy. If we can create a situation where trust in technology can be created, then humanity would be better off. Trust only comes when companies can be held accountable. A world of surveillance is just made of smoke and mirror. It is unaccountable and live in the shadows, so no one knows what it is really doing. So, we need to ensure that it never happens.

I trust you will do your best for the better good of mankind.

Sincerely,

Gabriel Padis