

In contemporary society, technology is integral to every aspect of life, from education and work to entertainment. Each interaction with technology generates data that is stored by major tech companies like Google, Amazon, and Facebook. These corporations utilize sophisticated algorithms to collect and sell user information, raising significant privacy concerns. Understanding the magnitude of this issue and knowing how to protect online privacy are crucial first steps in addressing this problem.

It is widely known that social media platforms are not truly free; they are funded by selling user data. Personal details, such as birthdays and anniversaries, are leveraged to deliver targeted advertisements. GPS data is tracked to monitor user locations, workplaces, and schools. These activities are facilitated by algorithms capable of processing vast amounts of data to extract specific details about individuals, constituting a clear violation of privacy.

For instance, the BBC reported that Facebook collects location-related information through users' IP addresses even when GPS tracking is disabled. Additionally, Facebook retains users' deleted search histories. While some features might enhance user experience, tracking users without their consent or retaining deleted data directly contravenes their wishes. This raises a crucial question: how far is too far, and what can be done to protect our privacy?

Several solutions can help maintain online privacy. One effective tool is Tor, the onion router, which obscures your IP address by routing it through multiple hosts in the Tor network. This makes it difficult for companies to track your browsing history. Another tool is a Virtual Private Network (VPN), which creates a secure, encrypted tunnel for your internet activity, further protecting your anonymity online. VPNs are especially useful for sensitive activities like online banking, as they prevent third-party companies from identifying your financial institution.

The most critical issue with these companies is their deceitful practices motivated by profit. Proverbs 13:11 states, "Dishonest money dwindles away, but whoever gathers money little by little makes it grow." This proverb underscores the unethical nature of these companies' secretive behavior and their lack of transparency regarding data usage.

While technology is a remarkable tool with numerous benefits, it also has its drawbacks. The convenience offered by tracking algorithms has led to a significant erosion of trust in tech companies. By highlighting the lack of privacy online, it becomes imperative for everyone to become informed and adopt solutions to protect their privacy. Awareness and proactive measures are the first steps in combating these companies' invasive data practices.

Sources

Calver, Tom. "What tech giants really do with your data." BBC News, July 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-44702483>

Proverbs 13:11