MIT BDA Module 1 Unit 1 Video 6 Transcript

Speaker key

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HY: HapYak

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AP: As I began getting into this work, back in sort of the early 2000s, it became clear to me that there was going to be an important problem that would block use of this data and all of the sort of commercial applications, and that was privacy. People just don't want to be spied on and it's not good for society to have people tracked everywhere because you can imagine what happens when a bad government or an intrusive government gets into power. So I began discussions in the World Economic Forum and within the UN about what to do about this.

HY: Personal data

HY: A world that counts

AP: What we did is we discussed, how can there be a win-win-win solution? A win for citizens in that their privacy is protected; a win for governments is they still get to do things like understand how the country is going; and a win for companies in that they can make money. And you need to recognize that a lot of this data comes from companies; it's not government data so you need buy-in from all of these people.

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And the result of these questions was what I call the new deal on data which is: citizens have the right to possess, control and dispose of data that is about them. Well, this is very alien to a lot of companies. Usually you think, well, if I collect the data, it's mine. Well, sorry, that's not a politically viable stance. You have to be very clear about what you're collecting, you have to tell people exactly what it's for and they have to be able to opt out. That's what this right to control and dispose means.

And some of the people in my group were people like the Chief Justice Minister of the EU and the Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission, and as a result of these sorts of discussions they've instituted new laws and regulations in both the EU and the US and now, increasingly, in the rest of the world that puts the consumer central in data about them. So you can still get away with those long UELAs and doing stuff but not for long.

So if you want to build a sustainable business you have to rethink it and think, how can I have an engagement with a customer where I'm respectful of their ownership of the data? And there's a lot of ways to begin doing that so some of the technical things that we'll mention is: don't share data

with people, share answers. Answers are a lot less invasive than the data itself because the data can be re-shared and you might not know it, whereas if it's just an answer, that has a lot more focus and a lot more relation to the use of the data. So we've built systems that use this principle of sharing answers, not data, and is able to share commercially valuable data in a way that doesn't endanger the privacy of citizens.

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One such system is called Open Algorithms, or OPAL, has been tried in cities in several different continents around the world. Another one is called Enigma and its generated a lot of excitement because not only does it not endanger the privacy of the individuals; data is kept encrypted all the time so even the National Security Agency of the US can't get at the data without your permission. So these are all public, they're on the web; if you're interested

HY: 1. OPAL

2. Enigma

- White paper

3. OpenPDS

AP: please go see them on the web and keep it in mind as we go through the rest of this course.