Ethical Case Study Analysis

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The information communication technology (ICT) known as the Internet of Things (IoT) seems to promise a future in which networks of devices work together to bring about a personalized experience. The environment around an individual would modify itself to the individuals needs according to the series of devices they have implemented in various parts of their life. This is the image that Polina (n.d.) painted in a Ted-Ed lesson regarding the IoT. It was estimated that there would be 50 billion objects connected to the internet by 2020 (Polina, n.d.). However, such a capable technology is not without ethical or ICT policy issues. For these devices to work in the way that is imagined then the question of privacy becomes a major ethical issue. Storage, usage, and protection of data bring ICT policy issues. An analysis of these issues will be discussed through the use of articles that provide insight to these issues.

Analysis

One of the major ethical implications of the technology is privacy. These devices will require enormous amounts of user data to be collected in order to operate properly. An article by Randi W. Singer and Adrian J. Perry discuss the various factors that must be considered if organizations are to remain transparent about IoT devices and user data. For example, the authors make recommendations such as clearly communicating what is being collected, what data is being shared, and limiting data usage. Individuals may be unaware of what the organizations are truly collecting or sharing about them and it is the responsibility of the organization to ensure the user is knowledgeable and are able to consent to this. Furthermore, Singer & Perry (2015) bring up one of the complex aspects to privacy and that is when user data is transmitted across different

mediums such as social media. They emphasize the need for organizations to inform users that their data will be falling under different privacy policies as it travels through different devices or applications (Singer & Perry, 20215). This reveals just how complicated privacy will be as IoT technologies grow. The data of one person being subject to various policies that they may not even be aware about and each set of policies may differ vastly. A solution for this may be the creation of a privacy framework that can be adopted by manufacturers of IoT devices.

As for the ICT policy implications of IoT devices, an article by Jack Karsten is able to give various perspectives on the ICT technoloogy. For example, as encryption technologies grow and make it more difficult for law enforcement to rely on investigating communication devices, IoT is seen as a potential solution (Karsten, 2016). This is because the various IoT devices may be able to aggregate the data law enforcement need for their investigations. However, this does mean that legislation must be made to consider how the government can access and use the data IoT devices collect (Karsten, 2016). Another aspect of ICT policy implications that is raised is how policymakers will support and implement the technology. For example, the possible economic benefits of IoT devices should push policymakers to support more research, engineering, entrepreneurs, and education (Karsten, 2016). There is also the matter of leadership carefully considering how the data collected by IoT devices can be used to improve things such as energy usage or transportation (Karsten, 2016). IoT technologies may not be as beneficial as they should be if policymakers do not support the development and proper usage of them. As the government decides the course of action regarding IoT devices they should involve other stakeholders as well such as the private sector

and academics in order to devise policy that is meaningful and heedful of privacy concerns.

Conclusion

IoT devices are a technology that can enhance various aspects of an individuals life, but the technology itself brings ethical and ICT policy concerns. Organizations will have to take steps so that individuals are more aware of the information that is collected about them and its usage. The government will have to make policies to support the growth of the technology and must consider legislation to protect the privacy of individuals. Critical thinking was a part of this analysis as the various ethical and ICT policy issues regarding IoT technologies were considered rather than just the perceived benefits of the technology.

References

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