

# COSC 244

AUTHOR: ELSIE SUN

STUDENT ID: 4468203

# Data Ethics about Facebook

In the present day and age of information explosion, people are transmitting and receiving a lot of information every day. Also, individuals are deeply concerned about Internet privacy, because some of Internet companies illegally collect personal data, or disseminate them without notifying their users. Taking Facebook as an example, many people are using Facebook or similar social software; and such social software might collect private data at the same time, which is not ethical. This report will talk about how Facebook organizes our information, and illustrate where the information come from based on personal experience. And finally, the ethical issue is discussed at the end of this report.

Facebook organizes our information in a very detailed manner. It records the security and login information, location, contact information, applications, as well as websites that we use Facebook to log into. According to my personal profile of Facebook, it classifies my all kinds of information in a very detailed way. For example, Facebook stores my contact information, includes all my friends' names, phone numbers, and the last date of contact. To some extent, the obtaining of all my friends' information indicates the leakage of my friends' privacy to Facebook. Besides this, posting and sharing are two major highlights of sociality that lead to Facebook's success. my posts and shares are classified as photos, videos, statuses, and many more. However, except the information we provided, sometimes it is unknown to public that in what approach that Facebook collects the information which is not expected to be collected, and we will discuss this and related issue in the rest of this report.

There are three main ways to collect private data, which are the data we provide, the information that our electrical devices provide, and the information that Facebook's third-party partners provide, respectively. When we create a user account on applications or install software, most of us tend to ignore the following sentence: "I read and agree to the terms and conditions", and simply click on the "agree" button in a rather hasty manner. Without a doubt, there is important information in these terms and conditions. When we click the "agree" button, we agree that the application collects our private information. Again, taking Facebook as an example, the terms in Facebook reserve the rights of the company to collect all of the information when we use Facebook or any Facebook-related products. In my case, Facebook collects my geographical location from Pokémon Go, Lime, Softonic.com, and other related applications or websites. Also, Facebook collects data from devices, such as device attributes, device operations, settings, and many more. This allows Facebook to access our GPS location, photos, and other private data about us. It is very often to see that when we post or share something on Facebook, it automatically records and upload our GPS information to Facebook server.

In my opinion, it is not right that Facebook gather and store all private information. Yet, Facebook brings benefit to our everyday life, and it indeed becomes an important communication tool to us. Most people use Facebook to chat

with friends, family, and follow news via post or share from them. In addition, users can use groups or clubs to share knowledges and organize activities on Facebook. Despite all that, Facebook collects private data, which is neither legal nor ethical. According to the New Zealand Privacy Act 1993, an agency that holds personal information shall ensure that the information is protected. Privacy leakage has been a problem that cannot be ignored. Today, people tend to use Facebook to access applications or websites, which is convenient and efficient, but clients do not know that Facebook collects their information at the same time. Facebook collects and analyses personal information for commercial benefit, it will target advertisements to users, which Facebook thinks people may interested in, but Facebook does not consider whether users want to see these advertisements. Besides, Facebook shares and uses our data with its third-party partners, especially since it has data-sharing deals with other tech companies, including Amazon, Apple, Microsoft, Netflix, and so forth. This means all of these companies can access our private information at any given time, even when we had disabled all sharing functionality in our Facebook setting. Even if users decide to delete the relevant data on Facebook, it will not affect Facebook, because it already shared these data to other tech firms. In addition to this, Facebook monitors us to some extent, it accesses our GPS, purchase history, financial transactions, camera, and so on. As a result, people's privacy is not secured because they do not know who already had their personal data. More seriously, the sensitive data can be exposed to others. If our private information is accessed by criminals, the consequences are unimaginable.

In conclusion, Facebook gathers users' private data through a personal profile, mobile devices, and cooperating third-party partners. Facebook classifies our information very exhaustively, and there are many different files to stores the diverse dataset. Finally, Facebook seems to cannot properly protect personal information from exposing to the public. As such, it collects and stores personal data, and then uses and shares personal information with other tech firms, which is unethical behaviour.

## Reference List:

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