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08/27/2020

CS 30600: Computers in Society

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Privacy and New Technology

It is common knowledge that Facebook collects user data. This data is then used to serve personalized ads. Even someone who doesn’t use Facebook can be tracked through websites that use their advertising or social application programming interfaces (API) which link back to Facebook. While they can send users personalized ads if they are a member, they can only send ads to encourage someone to join Facebook if they aren’t a member. Facebook has a massive network of ads and APIs and they will store information regarding non-users for 10-days when accessed through the APIs, anything else is stored for 90 days (Wagner).

This massive collection of data seems impossible to stop; however, a new iOS update will change that. iOS 14 is coming in the Fall and it will require developers to notify users if a special ID that is used to track their app usage is accessed. Additionally, this update will require uses to opt-in to have their ID used by those apps. This opt-in feature will cause a lack of use of the special ID. Meaning that users will in effect have better control over their privacy against companies that collect it. Especially in the face of Facebook who has had claims leverage against them for their collections of user data (Cox).

Wagner highlights how our privacy is at risk and that ties into the second chapter of our text on privacy, Cox’s article (the one I am focusing on) helps highlight the changing nature of privacy and how it is not only on us to advocate for our privacy, but also on the developer to enact privacy positive features.

References

Wagner, Kurt. “This is how Facebook collects data on you even if you don’t have an account.” *Vox*. 20 Apr. 2020, <https://www.vox.com/2018/4/20/17254312/facebook-shadow-profiles-data-collection-non-users-mark-zuckerberg#:~:text=Facebook%20appears%20to%20collect%20data,Facebook's%20recent%20blog%20post%20described.&text=The%20other%20main%20way%20Facebook,from%20its%20contact%20upload%20feature>.

Cox, Kate. “iOS 14 privacy settings will tank ad targeting business, Facebook warns.” *Ars Technica*. 26 Aug. 2020, <https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2020/08/ios-14-privacy-settings-will-tank-ad-targeting-business-facebook-warns/>