

REGENTS IN ELA

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

REGENTS EXAMINATION

IN

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Monday, August 19, 2024 — 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., only

The possession or use of any communications device is strictly prohibited when taking this examination. If you have or use any communications device, no matter how briefly, your examination will be invalidated and no score will be calculated for you.

A separate answer sheet has been provided for you. Follow the instructions for completing the student information on your answer sheet. You must also fill in the heading on each page of your essay booklet that has a space for it, and write your name at the top of each sheet of scrap paper.

The examination has three parts. For Part 1, you are to read the texts and answer all 24 multiple-choice questions. For Part 2, you are to read the texts and write one source-based argument. For Part 3, you are to read the text and write a text-analysis response. The source-based argument and text-analysis response should be written in pen. Keep in mind that the language and perspectives in a text may reflect the historical and/or cultural context of the time or place in which it was written.

When you have completed the examination, you must sign the statement printed at the bottom of the front of the answer sheet, indicating that you had no unlawful knowledge of the questions or answers prior to the examination and that you have neither given nor received assistance in answering any of the questions during the examination. Your answer sheet cannot be accepted if you fail to sign this declaration.

DO NOT OPEN THIS EXAMINATION BOOKLET UNTIL THE SIGNAL IS GIVEN.

Part 1

Directions (1–24): Closely read each of the three passages below. After each passage, there are several multiple-choice questions. Select the best suggested answer to each question and record your answer on the separate answer sheet provided for you. You may use the margins to take notes as you read.

Reading Comprehension Passage A

The Benefactor

My name is Francisco Orihuela. Usually that is enough for people to know who I am and what I do. My novels have been translated into nineteen languages, I have won several literary prizes, some quite important, such as the one Planeta Publications gives out, the Romulo Gallegos, and the Medici—I was even being considered quite seriously for the 5 Nobel a few years ago. Sales of my work run to the millions. I have been president of the PEN Club, my face appears in newspapers and magazines all over the world, either in photos or cartoons.

Now that you have my credentials, let me tell you that Francisco Orihuela is nothing more than a façade, a hoax. The name is real, but not all it stands for on the top rung of the 10 literary ladder where some would put me. There is only one person in the world who knows my story—knew, that is, since I am afraid he died some ten or twelve years ago, in Europe, perhaps in Italy, perhaps a poor man—and it is to this person I owe what I am and all that I have—money, fame, and the despair that has been with me since he vanished. I have never seen his face, never heard his voice, do not know his name or his nationality, and have 15 only a few definite proofs that he existed, passed fleetingly through the world and for some years through my life. For the want of a better name, I began referring to him as The Benefactor, or simply “B,” and now that I have almost lost all hope of ever meeting him I feel I should use the meager literary talents I possess to try to explain methodically—probably quite tediously—my relationship with him and the cataclysm which shook my life 20 when he first came into it one autumn afternoon twenty years ago.

I remember how I received a Western Union cable one afternoon after five. It announced laconically,¹ but sure of its facts, that I had just won first prize for the novel, as judged by the Spanish publishing house Planeta, for my book *Saint Appolonia's Back Teeth*.² I will never forget how I sat nailed to the chair by surprise, since I had never written 25 any such book, my only contributions to literature being three or four articles on Indians in the review published by the University of Trujillo, where I was then Professor of Peruvian literature. I had never written a work of fiction in my life and was quite satisfied with my teaching and research, in spite of the scanty financial remuneration that goes with being a professor at a provincial university. . . .

30 After speaking on the phone with the public relations manager in Barcelona I was even more at a loss. He told me there was no possible mistake, congratulated me ceremoniously, and read out the results of the voting, with the final ballot in my favor. He listed the other works that had reached the finals and read the jury's decision in all its flowing rhetoric, leaving no doubt that Francisco Orihuela had won the famous prize with his novel *Saint Appolonia's Back Teeth*. All I could do was thank him; it would be useless to insist that I was 35

¹laconically — briefly

²Saint Appolonia — a Christian martyr who was tortured by having her teeth pulled

not the winner. I did have the presence of mind, however, to ask him for a copy of the manuscript, explaining that a few urgent corrections needed to be made; he refused, politely but firmly, and offered rather to send a copy of the galley proofs in about six weeks time so I could make the corrections then and still meet the publication deadline. Ideally, 40 the book should come out as soon as possible—and he invited me to Barcelona for the celebration.

While absentmindedly going through the cards from friends and relatives I found a letter from the Banco Exterior de España which was short and to the point. In the envelope was a check for ten thousand dollars—the concrete part of the prize. I am under no 45 obligation to explain my behavior, but I will say that was five years' salary for a professor of my standing and a small fortune for me. All I had to do was play it as it lay and it would be mine. If something had gone wrong, it was in my favor; if the mistake still had not been caught after all the publicity about the prize, perhaps that meant the true author, for secret 50 reasons I could not imagine, must be in a position which made him unable to accept it. I wondered if he couldn't show his face in public for political or family reasons and so had chosen me, an unknown provincial university professor, to stand in for him.

There would be a price to pay of course, and if I lent my name and claimed the money I would have to assume responsibility for setting things straight once he got in touch with me. Something was not quite right about the whole affair, but the phone soon began brrring non-stop, and I realized that if I was going to accept the prize I would need to take care 55 of a number of details; otherwise, the whole world was going to learn about the mystery.

The text is a piece of grand guignol,³ exaggerated, phoney, unauthentic, cynical in tone, but with all the earmarks of a best seller. My feelings were contradictory; on the one hand it didn't seem right that so uneven a piece of work should win such an important prize, on 60 the other any success it had would be to my good, since officially I was the author.

I was living in a bachelor apartment on the Via Augusta and getting a divorce when my agent Jordi called me early one morning to congratulate me on my second novel. He hadn't been able to put the manuscript down all night and couldn't wait to tell me that for this beauty we'd easily get a twenty-five-thousand-dollar advance from one of the publishing 65 houses.

I was still trying to make up my mind again regarding my benefactor and his secret intentions when a messenger from Jordi came round with a photocopy of the manuscript for me to make some corrections. It was in an ordinary blue file cover with three-hundred-and-nine typewritten pages and my name on the first one, well centered, with the title 70 underneath—*Montezuma's Peacock*—and the date—the current month.

Montezuma's Peacock won the Medici Prize for the best foreign novel that year, and the following year it won the Romulo Gallegos, but I managed to get out of going to either ceremony by pretending to be ill. Black Sparrow Press published in translation a collection of my essays on Indians with the title *Identity Path*, and it was very well received in 75 academic circles. I was almost happy. Three years had gone by since the last manuscript had appeared, and I nursed a hope that B had forgotten me once his whim was spent. Then the envelope arrived. As when a spy's shoulder is tapped to remind him that he can never escape his calling and lead a normal life, so it was with me. Jordi enclosed a copy of the

³guignol — melodrama

80 manuscript with his letter "just in case you want to make any changes" and congratulated me "not without fear, now that you've set out to write the great trilogy which, will doubtless figure as your life's work." He enclosed volume I, entitled *The Long Journey*. ...

—Rodolfo Hinostroza

excerpted from “The Benefactor”

Fiction International, Issue 23, Spring 1993

translated by Alita Kelley

Syracuse University

Reading Comprehension Passage B

Weir Farm

Weir Farm is a national park set on the sixty-acre site of painter J. Alden Weir's home in Connecticut.

Not vistas, but a home-sized landscape,
beloved rooms storied, painted, lived.

A farm bought with a painting
and a ten dollar personal check.

- 5 And almost from the beginning,
the intention to pass on
what an artist sees, what artists make.
A parcel of land, a vast legacy.

Admire the houses, barns, outbuildings,
10 and studios, uniformly Venetian red.¹

Respect the visible sweat work of stones
laid in walls and foundations, terraces and walks.
Admire the sunken garden, the wildflower meadows,
the path through thick woods to the fishing pond.

- 15 Walk through the farm envisioned by artists.
Admire the home artists made.

Or you can step from a museum's polished floor
across a carven,² gilded threshold
into the farm reimagined in brushstrokes.

- 20 From that wooden bridge over there,
hear those three women's tinkling laughter?
Over there the other way, see
the black dog panting near the youngish man
lifting stones into a half-built wall?

- 25 Step out of the frame again, and be
enveloped in birdsong and dapple.³
Feel the welcome of small particulars:
the grove beside that boulder,
the white horse tied in front of that barn.

- 30 With eyes made tender, see
those elms, from shadows on the grass
to the highest leaves' shimmer.

¹Venetian red — warm red

²carven — carved

³dapple — spots of color or light

- With your friends, lovers, family, stride
across this chromatic⁴ broken brushwork.
- 35 Sit a minute at the granite picnic table
with the artist's daughters, dressed in summer white.
You can daub⁵ this earth, so lyric, so gentle,
from the limited palette of your own love right now.
Any place you care for can hold an easel.
- 40 Everything around you is beautiful plein air.⁶

—Marilyn Nelson
“Weir Farm”
www.poets.org, November 1, 2016

⁴chromatic — colorful

⁵daub — to apply paint with quick strokes

⁶plein air — the act of painting outdoors

- 10 The “intention” stated in line 6 most likely refers to Weir Farm serving to
- (1) inspire an appreciation of art
 - (2) commemorate an historical event
 - (3) preserve traditional farm life
 - (4) honor famous artists
- 11 Lines 11 and 12 emphasize the
- (1) practical design of the farm
 - (2) elegant buildings on the farm
 - (3) enjoyment felt by visitors to the farm
 - (4) labor expended by builders of the farm
- 12 Lines 17 through 19 imply that people who view a painting can
- (1) criticize the artists' techniques
 - (2) question the artists' intentions
 - (3) imagine themselves as part of the artwork
 - (4) imagine themselves as creators of the artwork
- 13 The description in lines 33 through 35 asks people to take the time to
- (1) support the creativity of others
 - (2) recognize the beauty around them
 - (3) evaluate their personal relationships
 - (4) appreciate their ancestral homes
- 14 The poem is primarily developed through the use of
- | | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| (1) simile | (3) imagery |
| (2) personification | (4) hyperbole |

Reading Comprehension Passage C

Extreme Pogo

...In the more than eight decades since a Russian immigrant named George B. Hansburg introduced the pogo stick to America, the device had scarcely changed: a homely stilt with foot pegs and a steel coil spring that bopped riders a few inches off the ground. And bopped. And bopped. And bopped. ...

5 But not long ago, three inventors—toiling at home, unaware of one another's existence—set out to reimagine the pogo. What was so sacred about that ungainly¹ steel coil? they wondered. Why couldn't you make a pogo stick brawny enough for a 250-pound adult? And why not vault riders a few feet, instead of measly inches? If athletes were pulling “big air” on skateboards, snowboards and BMX bikes, why couldn't the pogo stick be just as, well, gnarly?² ...

10 In time, [Bruce] Middleton, along with two other inventors—a robotics engineer at Carnegie Mellon University and a retired California firefighter—would see their ideas take wing. The Guinness Book of World Records would establish a new category—highest jump on a pogo stick—which a 17-year-old Canadian, Dan Mahoney, would set in 2010 by leaping, pogo and all, over a bar set at 9 feet 6 inches. Pogopalooza, an annual competition that started in 2004 with six guys in a church parking lot in Nebraska, graduated last year to a sports arena at the Orange County (California) fair. It drew thousands of fans and 50 of the world's best practitioners of “extreme pogo.” ...

15 But I hop ahead. Before Guinness and [a pogo stick demonstration on the Late Show with David] Letterman and the television lights, there were just three ordinary men, on lonely journeys, convinced that somewhere out there was a better pogo. ...

20 [Ben] Brown developed the BowGo to prove a simple idea: that with the right design and materials, a lightweight spring could conserve an extraordinarily high share of the energy put into it, with minimal losses to friction.

25 “*A pogo looks to us like a toy,*” said Matt Mason, the director of Carnegie Mellon’s Robotics Institute, where Brown has worked for three decades. “*To Ben, it’s an idea taken to its most radical extreme.*” ...

30 After a couple of years of field testing in his backyard and on campus greens, Brown pogoed over a bar set at 38 inches. “A couple of times, the foot slipped out and I was unconscious for a bit,” Brown recalled. “I remember some guy standing over me and saying, ‘Do you know your name?’ ”

35 It became clear that Brown, a grandfather of four, needed a younger test pilot. He shipped a prototype to Curt Markwardt, a Southern California video game tester who learned his first tricks on a \$5 pogo stick that a friend had bought as a joke at a toy store’s going-out-of-business sale.

40 Within months Markwardt had somersaulted on the BowGo over his car and cleared a bar set at 8 feet 7 inches, a record. When he’d first told friends about his passion for pogo, “people would kind of chuckle,” Markwardt told me. “They think of little kids bopping up and down and not doing anything.” But when “they see you jump six feet in the air and you do a flip, holy cow ... it turns into instant awesome.” ...

When Bruce Spencer retired after 28 years as a firefighter in Huntington Beach, California, he imagined a simpler life. A husky man with a broad brow and ruggedly handsome features, he dreamed of flying his two-passenger Cessna to Idaho and Colorado

¹ungainly — cumbersome

²gnarly — beyond extreme

45 and scouting the wilderness for a patch of earth to build a cabin and live out his years with his wife, Patti, in quiet.

A few months after leaving the department, though, Spencer hosted a family party. His nephew Josh Spencer had built a prototype adult-size pogo stick, stuffing a 33-inch steel spring into an aluminum tube. But the weight of all that metal made the stick unwieldy. Josh was venting about it at the party, and Bruce Spencer's son Brian went to his dad for advice.

50 "Brian comes in and says, 'Hey Dad, if you ever made a big pogo stick for adults, how would you do it?'" Bruce Spencer recalled.

Roused by the engineering challenge, Bruce Spencer dove into the project with such zeal that his wife often found him awake at night trying to unravel some pogo-related physics problem.

55 His first prototype³ was a Rube Goldberg⁴ mishmash of PVC irrigation pipe from Home Depot, truck tire valves, and pistons he machined in his garage. He found a polyurethane shock absorber at an off-road supply store and bolted it to the foot of the pogo to cushion landings. He pressurized the irrigation pipe to about 50 pounds per square inch with an air compressor.

60 The Spencers took 16 prototypes of their stick—the Vurtego, they called it—to the Ice Village at the 2002 Olympics in Salt Lake City. They were a hit with tourists, visiting athletes and TV cameras. "When I came home, I thought I'd have people champing at the bit⁵ to invest in the company," Bruce said. "It didn't happen."

65 Then, in September 2004, SBI Enterprises, the makers of the original pogo stick, released the Flybar, a high-powered pogo designed by Bruce Middleton. The Spencers despaired they'd missed the boat, but eventually glimpsed opportunity. The publicity surrounding the Flybar was helping establish a market for extreme pogo sticks.

70 When I [writer, Ariel Sabar] made an electronic search of files at the U.S. Patent Office, I found ideas for a gas-powered internal combustion pogo (1950) and a pogo with helicopter blades "for producing a gliding descent between jumps" (1969). In 1967, a Stanford University engineer unveiled designs for a "lunar leaper," a 1,200-pound vehicle with a pneumatic⁶ shaft that could bounce astronauts, in 50-foot arcs, across the low-gravity surface of the moon. In 1990, a San Jose man patented a pogo that crushes beer cans.

75 None of these adaptations took; some never got built, others never found a market. But why not? And why have others taken off now? The more I talked to Brown, Spencer and Middleton, the more convinced I became of the importance of culture—and timing. The late 1990s saw the rise of "extreme sports" and a generation of teenage mavericks doing stomach-churning tricks on skateboards, snowboards and BMX bikes. The advent of ESPN's annual X Games gave currency to phrases like "big air," "vert" and "gnarly." Soon 80 the label "extreme" was being attached to every manner of boundary-testing contest, from eating to couponing.

85 What none of the men knew then was that teenagers weaned on the X Games were rummaging through their garages for any old gizmo to take higher, farther or faster. The pogo appealed to kids who couldn't—or didn't want to—compete with the skateboarding hordes or who saw in its goofiness a kind of geeky cool. For several years before the supercharged pogos came to market, teenagers were refining low-altitude tricks like grinds

³prototype — an original model

⁴Rube Goldberg — a cartoonist famous for drawing ridiculously complicated machines performing simple tasks

⁵champing at the bit — eager

⁶pneumatic — operated by air or gas under pressure

and stalls on conventional sticks and swapping ideas and videos on websites like the Pogo Spot and Xpogo.

This time, when inventors came along with a new and better design, there was a market waiting—and a culture that could make sense of it as the latest extreme pastime. ...

—Ariel Sabar

excerpted and adapted from “Extreme Pogo”
Smithsonian, September 2012

Part 2

Argument

Directions: Closely read each of the **four** texts provided on pages 11 through 18 and write a source-based argument on the topic below. You may use the margins to take notes as you read and scrap paper to plan your response. Write your argument beginning on page 1 of your essay booklet.

Topic: Should companies be allowed to collect personal data?

Your Task: Carefully read each of the **four** texts provided. Then, using evidence from at least **three** of the texts, write a well-developed argument regarding whether or not companies should be allowed to collect personal data. Clearly establish your claim, distinguish your claim from alternate or opposing claims, and use specific, relevant, and sufficient evidence from at least **three** of the texts to develop your argument. Do *not* simply summarize each text.

Guidelines:

Be sure to:

- Establish your claim regarding whether or not companies should be allowed to collect personal data
- Distinguish your claim from alternate or opposing claims
- Use specific, relevant, and sufficient evidence from at least **three** of the texts to develop your argument
- Identify each source that you reference by text number and line number(s) or graphic (for example: Text 1, line 4 or Text 2, graphic)
- Organize your ideas in a cohesive and coherent manner
- Maintain a formal style of writing
- Follow the conventions of standard written English

Texts:

- Text 1 – The WIRED Guide to Your Personal Data (and Who Is Using It)
Text 2 – How Businesses Are Collecting Data (And What They're Doing With It)
Text 3 – How Companies Profit and Use Your Personal Data
Text 4 – The Secretive World of Selling Data About You

Text 1

The WIRED Guide to Your Personal Data (and Who Is Using It)

On the internet, the personal data users give away for free is transformed into a precious commodity. The puppy photos people upload train machines to be smarter. The questions they ask Google uncover humanity's deepest prejudices. And their location histories tell investors which stores attract the most shoppers. Even seemingly benign¹ activities, like

5 staying in and watching a movie, generate mountains of information, treasure to be scooped up later by businesses of all kinds. ...

All this information is collected on a wide spectrum of consent: Sometimes the data is forked over knowingly, while in other scenarios users might not understand they're giving up anything at all. Often, it's clear *something* is being collected, but the specifics are hidden

10 from view or buried in hard-to-parse² terms-of-service agreements.

Consider what happens when someone sends a vial of saliva to 23andme. The person knows they're sharing their DNA with a genomics company, but they may not realize it will be resold to pharmaceutical firms. Many apps use your location to serve up custom advertisements, but they don't necessarily make it clear that a hedge fund³ may also buy that

15 location data to analyze which retail stores you frequent. Anyone who has witnessed the same shoe advertisement follow them around the web knows they're being tracked, but fewer people likely understand that companies may be recording not just their clicks but also the exact movements of their mouse.

In each of these scenarios, the user received something in return for allowing a corporation to monetize⁴ their data. They got to learn about their genetic ancestry, use a mobile app, or browse the latest footwear trends from the comfort of their computer. This is the same sort of bargain Facebook and Google offer. Their core products, including Instagram, Messenger, Gmail, and Google Maps, don't cost money. You pay with your personal data, which is used to target you with ads.

25 The trade-off between the data you give and the services you get may or may not be worth it, but another breed of business amasses, analyzes, and sells your information without giving you anything at all: data brokers. These firms compile info from publicly available sources like property records, marriage licenses, and court cases. They may also gather your medical records, browsing history, social media connections, and online purchases.

30 Depending on where you live, data brokers might even purchase your information from the Department of Motor Vehicles. Don't have a driver's license? Retail stores sell info to data brokers, too. ...

Amassing and selling your data like this is perfectly legal. While some states, including California and Vermont, have recently moved to put more restrictions on data brokers, they

35 remain largely unregulated. The Fair Credit Reporting Act [FCRA] dictates how information collected for credit, employment, and insurance reasons may be used, but some data brokers have been caught skirting the law. In 2012 the "person lookup" site Spokeo settled with the FTC [Federal Trade Commission] for \$800,000 over charges that it violated the FCRA by advertising its products for purposes like job background checks. And data brokers that

¹benign — not harmful

²parse — understand

³hedge fund — pooled financial investments of several individuals that are controlled by an advisor

⁴monetize — to earn money from

- 40 market themselves as being more akin to digital phone books don't have to abide by the regulation in the first place.
- Some companies and researchers argue it's not enough for the government to simply protect personal data; consumers need to own their information and be compensated when it's used. Social networks like Minds and Steemit have experimented with rewarding users
- 45 with cryptocurrency when they share content or spend time using their platforms. Other companies will pay you in exchange for sharing data—your banking transactions, for instance—with them. But allowing people to take back ownership likely wouldn't solve every privacy issue posed by personal data collection. It might also be the wrong way to frame the issue: Instead, perhaps, less collection should be permitted in the first place, forcing
- 50 companies to move away from the targeted-advertising business model altogether.

—Louise Matsakis

excerpted and adapted from “The WIRED Guide to Your
Personal Data (and Who Is Using It)”
www.wired.com, February 15, 2019

Text 2

How Businesses Are Collecting Data (And What They're Doing With It)

Data has become a major priority for businesses of all sizes. As technologies that capture and analyze data proliferate,¹ so too do businesses' abilities to contextualize² data and draw new insights from it.

The internet of things and artificial intelligence are two critical tools for companies in data capture and analysis, from better understanding day-to-day operations, making business decisions and learning about their customers. ...

How Do Businesses Collect Your Data?...

“Customer data can be collected in three ways — by directly asking customers, by indirectly tracking customers, and by appending³ other sources of customer data to your own,” said [director of data science at Elicit, Liam] Hanham. “A robust business strategy needs all three.”

Businesses are adept at pulling in data from nearly every nook and cranny. The most obvious places are from consumer activity on their websites and social media pages, but there are some more interesting methods at work as well.

One example is location-based advertising, which utilizes an internet-connected device’s IP address (and the other devices it interacts with) to build a personalized data profile. This information is then used to target users’ devices with hyper-personalized, relevant advertising.

Companies will also dig deep into their own customer service records to see how customers have interacted with their sales and support departments in the past. Here, they are incorporating direct feedback about what worked and what didn’t, what a customer liked and disliked, on a grand scale.

In addition to collecting data, companies can also purchase it from or sell it to third-party sources. Once captured, this information is regularly changing hands in a data marketplace of its own. ...

How Do Businesses Use Your Data?

There are several ways companies use the consumer data they collect and the insights they draw from that data:

1. Improving customer experience

For many companies, consumer data offers a way to better understand and meet their customers’ demands. By analyzing customer behavior, as well as vast troves of reviews and feedback, companies can nimbly modify their digital presence, goods or services to better suit the current marketplace. ...

“Our most important source of marketing intelligence comes from understanding customer data and using it to improve our website functionality,” [digital manager for iHeartRaves, Brandon] Chopp said. “Our team has improved the customer experience by creating customized promotions and special offers based on customer data. Since each customer is going to have their own individual preferences, personalization is key.”

¹proliferate — expand

²contextualize — to consider something together with the information related to it

³appending — adding

2. Refining marketing strategy

- 35 Contextualized data can help companies understand how consumers are engaging with and responding to their marketing campaigns, and adjust accordingly. This highly predictive use case gives businesses an idea of what consumers will want based on what they have already done. Like other aspects of consumer data analysis, marketing is becoming more about personalization as a result, said Brett Downes, SEO manager at Ghost Marketing.
- 40 “Mapping users’ journeys and personalizing their journey, not just through your website but further onto platforms like YouTube, LinkedIn, Facebook or on to any other website is now essential,” Downes said. “Segmenting data effectively allows you to market to only the people you know are most likely to engage. These have opened up new opportunities in industries previously very hard to market to.”

3. Turning data into cash flow

- 45 Companies that capture data also stand to profit from it. Data brokers, or companies that buy and sell information on customers, have risen as a new industry alongside big data. For businesses that are capturing large amounts of data, this represents an opportunity for a new stream of revenue. . . .

4. Using data to secure data

- 50 Some businesses even use consumer data as a means of securing more sensitive information. For example, banking institutions will sometimes use voice recognition data to authorize a user to access their financial information or protect them from fraudulent attempts to steal their information.

- 55 These systems work by marrying data from a customer’s interaction with a call center and machine learning algorithms that can identify and flag potentially fraudulent attempts to access a customer’s account. This takes some of the guesswork and human error out of catching a con. . . .

—Adam C. Uzialko

excerpted and adapted from “How Businesses Are Collecting Data

(And What They’re Doing With It)”

www.businessnewsdaily.com, August 3, 2018

Text 3

How Companies Profit and Use Your Personal Data

...Freedom Isn't Free

In order to continue to receive services like Facebook and Google for no fee, the use of our personal data seems to be a price users are forced to pay as companies that do not produce any actual products seek profitability. But are a few targeted ads an acceptable price to pay for access to the largest library of knowledge and communal space in human existence?

- 5 Without the ability to sell us products and services using our personal information, users would be faced with either being confronted with a scatter-gun approach to advertising or having to pay a fee— as for Netflix— for traditionally free services such as search engines and social media. By using our personal data, companies can argue that they are giving us a better customer experience and keeping the internet largely free at point of entry. The inherent
10 concept of our personal sentiments and interests being used to increase up-selling¹ opportunities is one that many people will find distasteful and would prefer not to participate in, despite the possibility of a change in the way they can make purchases, as they feel their data is being used without their consent and is a violation of privacy. However, it is worth
15 remembering that monetisation² of customer data is as old as the grocery store loyalty card and hardly a new invention of the internet; the only difference being that we notice the advertising online as we use it almost constantly, as compared to just once a week at a grocery store. . . .

What Exactly is Personal Data?

Personal data can be broken up into three distinct categories:

- 20 Volunteered data: Content which is created and shared by individuals, including their social media profile data, such as what music and movies they like, football teams they support and general interests.

Observed data: This information is captured by recording the actions of the consumer/individual, such as where they live, their socio-economic status and if they are married or single.

- 25 Inferred data: This category is the one with the most practical value. Using the first two types of data brands can work out your sex, age, sexual orientation, interests, employment status, hobbies, etc. Using this information allows them to pre-empt your interests and offer you goods and services that would fit in the “box” of the specific person that they are targeting.

- 30 As much as consumers may want to opt-out of this type of data-mining and targeted marketing, many do not know or even realise what and when data is being collected about them, or by whom. The truth is that the internet as we know it has been built on this agreement between user and provider and should either [party] exploit³ and retract their position *too* much, the whole infrastructure⁴ could come tumbling down. . . .

¹up-selling — a sales technique used to persuade a customer to purchase a more expensive item

²monetisation — creating profit

³exploit — take advantage of

⁴infrastructure — underlying system

The Future of the Internet

35 We are now in the cross-over period in the history of the internet. Up to now it has largely been free to use and relied on people either being happy to give over their personal information or not caring or knowing enough about it to prevent it. With the increasing business costs and potential money to be made, it's likely that in the near future things could be somewhat different. In the future, data will power everything and be the most valuable
40 commodity in the world. As such, governments are going to get involved and regulate and control every aspect of the world wide web completely, including companies' ability to harvest it and use it for their own financial gain. The situation will either see personal data being treated as confidential information that cannot be accessed by outside agencies (such as personal medical data is now) or governments will demand a sizable cut, forcing big internet
45 companies to diversify their revenue stream in order to increase profits: i.e. charging for "free" services.

This could then present a class system of internet users, with the best and most useful websites only available to those who can afford them. This will leave the poor and less advanced societies unable to access the "A-Grade web" and forced to root around in bargain basement webpages and access questionable and hacked content that could be full of bugs and viruses. ...
50

—excerpted and adapted from “How Companies Profit and Use Your Personal Data”
CBS Screening
<https://cbscreening.co.uk>, 2019

Text 4

The Secretive World of Selling Data About You

You've probably had the experience of receiving mail, paper or electronic, from companies that obviously obtained your name from another company's list of customers. But what if you were to have a medical operation refused, without knowing it was because the hospital obtained a secret report that listed you as unlikely to pay? What if a college
5 covertly¹ turned you or your child down because they suspected you were unlikely to complete four years of payment? What if you didn't get a job, without knowing it was because of a report that listed you as a possible drug addict?

Those are the claims being made by critics of data brokers, companies which collect personal information on people through both public and private sources—from court records
10 to websites to store sales—and provide it to a wide range of buyers. A large portion of data brokerage is used for identity verification or fraud prevention. Much of it is used for traditional marketing.

But data brokers are serving a growing clientele eager to know a person's ethnicity, spending habits, sexual orientation, and specific illnesses such as HIV, diabetes, depression
15 or substance abuse. This information may be found directly in data broker records, or, increasingly, it may be predicted from other data. It's practically impossible for anyone to find all the information being passed around about themselves, or to correct it. As shady as it might sound, the entire industry is completely legal. ...

World Privacy Forum has prepared a lengthy report on consumer scoring. [Executive
20 Director, Pam] Dixon summarizes a key story in the report: "A major national health plan came to the quants² wanting to know how they could figure out how much to charge people. If a woman did a lot of online shopping, she was predicted to be a much higher health risk. If a couple bought hiking boots, that was considered a good factor. I doubt that when someone goes online to buy a scarf they think, 'This is going to affect my healthcare.' People
25 could be paying more for healthcare, but we'll never know. Acxiom and Experian sell lists of people with diseases. They claim it's a propensity³ [instead of a numeric score], but there's your name."

It's easy to see why an insurer, a college, or another high-price business would want scores on those they are considering doing business with. Just like a FICO⁴ score, a consumer score
30 could save a business from losing money. It could save an insurer from undercharging someone who then needs expensive coverage. But consumer scores could also create a secret blacklist.

In that shadow, there are three causes for concern. First, consumer scores are a secret.
35 If those who sell them are evasive about explaining details, those who use them usually are almost totally unknown. Second, collected data is often incorrect. "We found a 50 percent accuracy rate in Acxiom data we looked at," says Dixon, "and they are considered among the best."

[Privacy Clearing House director, Paul] Stephens agrees: "For the most part, the information is not vetted.⁵ The cost of vetting it would be prohibitive. There's a recognition
40 within the industry and among the people who buy the data that the information is not 100%

¹covertly — secretly

²quants — financial traders who use computer programs to identify trading opportunities

³propensity — a tendency to act a certain way

⁴FICO — a credit agency

⁵vetted — authenticated

correct.” Clients use it anyway, because inaccurate data is more helpful than no data. But you don’t have to be a computer scientist to realize that a score calculated from incorrect data can be misleading.

45 Third, and most disturbing, there’s nothing consumers can do about any of this. They don’t know what data is being collected, or by whom. They don’t know what’s being done with it. They don’t know where it is going. They probably imagine specific lists being sent around, not calculated scores that may seem unrelated to the original data. And if they are concerned, there’s no way to see or correct the information about themselves being passed around. . . .

50 It seems likely that data collection and consumer scoring will only increase, at a fast-growing rate. Trying to escape it seems futile. A better focus might be to try to define what is and isn’t acceptable to collect, what is and isn’t acceptable use, and how to keep data brokers from keeping their information about us a secret from ourselves.

—Paul Boutin

excerpted and adapted from “The Secretive World of
Selling Data About You”
www.newsweek.com, May 30, 2016

Part 3

Text-Analysis Response

Your Task: Closely read the text provided on pages 20 and 21 and write a well-developed, text-based response of two to three paragraphs. In your response, identify a central idea in the text and analyze how the author's use of **one** writing strategy (literary element or literary technique or rhetorical device) develops this central idea. Use strong and thorough evidence from the text to support your analysis. *Do not* simply summarize the text. You may use the margins to take notes as you read and scrap paper to plan your response. Write your response in the spaces provided on pages 7 through 9 of your essay booklet.

Guidelines:

Be sure to:

- Identify a central idea in the text
- Analyze how the author's use of **one** writing strategy (literary element or literary technique or rhetorical device) develops this central idea. Examples include: characterization, conflict, denotation/connotation, metaphor, simile, irony, language use, point-of-view, setting, structure, symbolism, theme, tone, etc.
- Use strong and thorough evidence from the text to support your analysis
- Organize your ideas in a cohesive and coherent manner
- Maintain a formal style of writing
- Follow the conventions of standard written English

Text

Ordinary Light

...We were heading to Mr. Gus's ranch, because my father loved to eat two pieces of toast with his breakfast and to fold each slice around pears cooked to an impossible sweetness and spiced with cinnamon and cloves or two figs swimming in thick amber syrup. My father's love of breakfast had turned the morning meal, for all of us, into a ritual, a rite we
5 enacted with joy every single day. To that end, every summer, I helped my mother stir vast pots of the summer's harvest into the thick magic we'd later ladle into the glass canning jars. And every morning, practically, I'd spoon some of the stuff from summers past onto my own toast or biscuit, hardly thinking that so much of what the jams and preserves were made of was her.

10 The Gustafssons lived in a modest red ranch house just over the hill on the other side of the interstate, but they had a whole hillside's worth of fig trees and orchards of pears, peaches, apricots (which we called "ape-ricots," though just about everyone I met later in life would say "app"), and bitter black walnuts, along with a few old work mules and some chickens and cows. And there were cats and dogs that wandered the acres in obedience to
15 their own sense of purpose, barely interested in stopping to let you pat their thistle-ridden fur. When they got to be a little older, my brothers helped out at the Gustafssons' place to earn spending money in the summer months. Once, they watched in anxious disbelief as a bull scratched the dirt with his front legs and blew out a cloud of hot steam before charging straight for where they stood filling his water trough. They hopped the fence to
20 safety in time, but even when they told the story years later, there remained the shadow of terror just beneath their laughter.

At the top of the Gustafssons' drive, there were bags of picked fruit waiting for us on the porch, but Mr. Gus took us on a tour of the ranch before packing them into our car.
25 We'd just come from church. I was wearing one of my favorite outfits, a blue-and-white dress with a white cardigan and socks and brown Buster Brown shoes. Our ankles and feet got dusty following Mr. Gus through the parched grass and sun-baked dirt, but no one seemed bothered by it. Even my sisters and mother walking in high heels and pantyhose didn't seem to mind.

As we came to each different variety of tree, Mr. Gus would pull down a bough and offer
30 everyone a piece of fruit. My mother split open an apricot with her thumbs and handed it to me. The flesh was warm and sweet, with a bright tang that reminded me of sunlight. Later, she gave me a bite of a small peach and bits of a walnut Mr. Gus had cracked between his bare hands. Mischief flashed on her face as she tore a fig in two and put half of it into
35 my father's mouth. When she offered some to me, I said, "No, thank you," and shook my head, repulsed by the white pith¹ and the pulpy flesh. It looked like a venomous sea creature, but when she lifted the fruit to her own lips, she practically swooned, like a woman on television who had just lowered herself into a bathtub full of bubbles.

When we approached a hen and her cluster of chicks, I instinctively began to reach out toward the downy babies, but Mr. Gus stopped me. Without speaking, he placed his hand
40 near the chicks and held it there a moment. Immediately, the mother began to flap her wings in agitation and moved in angrily to peck him. She bobbed up and down, driving her beak into his bare hand like the needle in my mother's sewing machine. He didn't recoil right away, but when he finally did and gave me his hand to examine, there was a purpled

¹pith — spongy tissue lining the rind of fruit

45 and bloody patch of skin the diameter of a gobstopper.² I pulled the sleeves of my cardigan down over my own hands and walked on.

We came to a clearing where a few cows and one calf stood grazing. The cows were unbothered and slow, larger than any other living thing I'd seen up close. Mr. Gus laid a hand on one, who didn't stop her jaws from their slow grind of a clump of grass, though her head swung around to face him. Her eyes were deep and kindly, rimmed in black and shaded by thick long lashes, like a lady's. I couldn't help it; her placid femininity backed by quiet strength—not like the frantic hen whose love had made her nervous but rather calm, grounded in a steadfast, sturdy certainty—reminded me of my mother. Instantly, I trusted her, would have lifted my own hand to the thick mottled³ wall of fur were it not for her calf, which was watching us from farther away. Small and brown, with new fur I could already imagine the plush of against my cheek, the calf saw me, too, and she (I decided it was a she) stood still, having also just grasped our shared affinity⁴ (at least it seemed that she had), eyeing me in a way I took to mean that my own feelings were mirrored in hers. I forgot all about the wicked chicken as I ran toward the calf, who took a few lively steps away, but coyly, as if to suggest we play a game of tag.

60 *This is for me*, I remember telling myself, meaning the sweet young calf and the strong, serene mother. I knew that I knew them, understood their bond, and that they knew me, too. I knew that I could slip in among them for a moment and revel in the love that spread out around them. It was all I knew, and so I dashed after the calf, laughing, wanting to show her, to step into their version of the language my mother and I spoke, and to carry 65 that joy, that giddy out-of-breath knowing, back over into the human.

Then, before I could tell myself what had happened, the calf was lowering her two hind legs back to the ground and casting a quick look over her shoulder as she pranced off. And I was doubled into myself, clutching my stomach, which throbbed and burned where the calf's hooves had struck me, ashamed for the sobs that any second, I knew, would begin to issue from my throat.

70 I felt betrayed, stunned by this first taste of cruelty. It was my first collision with the world's solid fist.

—Tracy K. Smith
excerpted from *Ordinary Light*, 2016
Vintage Books

²gobstopper — a large, round hard candy

³mottled — spotted

⁴affinity — like-mindedness

REGENTS IN ELA