

## **SHOULD SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM BE BANNED FROM COLLECTING THEIR USER'S DATA?**

Social media originated to interact with friends and family but was later adopted by businesses that wanted to take advantage of the popular communication method to reach out to customers. The collection of social media data is used to understand what type of content users are engaged with and personalize their online experience according to their preferences (Mendes, n.d.). Nonetheless, social media platform should be banned from collecting their user's data because it attracts cybercriminals and intrusive targeted ads.

It is not safe for social media to hoard user data because platforms that excessively collect private and personal information attracts cybercriminals and identity thieves. This problem occurs because of how valuable vast amount of user data that jumpstarts cybercrime activities such as phishing, credit card information theft or even selling them to third parties for business analytics. It is also reasonable to not completely trust the security of any company keeping your data as breaches can occur for the slightest of vulnerability such as Facebook database leak in 2019 (SelfKey, 2022). Thus, user data collection inadvertently attracts cybercriminals.

Besides, by collecting user's personal information social media platform can display targeted ads that can be harmful on certain instances. Advertisers to track your activity around the web to determine which ads that are more appealing to you and influence you to buy their products (King, 2019). Also, targeted ads do not spare vulnerable individuals such as children and gambling addicts which can lead them to wasteful purchases without realizing it (Fast Company, 2021). Thus, targeted ads can be viewed as predatory practice that tracks user's activity to maximize profit.

Some may claim that social media helps expand your social network by finding people that have the same interest as you. However, this can backfire as the platform creates an echo chamber based on your viewpoint to increase user engagement. The biggest problem with echo chamber is the inability for user to notice them as the algorithm creates an ideal space for you without anyone challenging your perspective (Goodall, 2021). For instance, any anti-mask/anti-vaccine movement on social media is an example of echo chamber effect despite scientific evidence.

Although the social media originally came to be with good intentions, companies should be banned from collecting user data with intention to maximize engagement and profit.

## References

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