Synopsis

In my exam paper, I look to social media security as a subject, as I believe that the rapid growth in the use of social media platforms through the years is resulting in lack of attention to personal security in connection with social media, and the different privacy issues this entails.

The rapid growth of popularity on social media platforms such as Facebook seems to be accompanied by many users’ lack of attention to their own privacy and security. In using a social media platform such as Facebook, as a user you are constantly required to share personal information about yourself. To become a user of Facebook, you must share your full name, birthday, email address or phone number and your gender, which does not seem like very important information in this day and age but sharing these four types of information about yourself as a user is just the beginning. On Facebook there seem to be an ongoing tendency to share your photos, your likes and dislikes and your opinions with the rest of the platform and thereby the rest of the world, with little to no regard to the possible consequences of sharing this data, and how Facebook as a software handles this data. This seem to show the level of knowledge we as users have of what sharing personal data entails and what results that can come from sharing, and this issue is what my exam paper will investigate.

Some of the questions asked to address this issue are the following:

How has Facebook developed over time as a social media platform, and what security initiatives are seen in this development? What happens to the personal information, and thereby the data that users share on social media platforms such as Facebook? Why is there a tendency to share personal information about yourself on Facebook? And can anything be done to better inform users of the consequences of sharing personal data?

One of the texts from the curriculum that this exam paper will include is ”Data Visualisation” by Richard Wright. In this text Wright explains the term visualization as *“[…] Any transformation of digital material into a visual rendering […]”*, and this is relevant in relation to my choice of subject in explaining how common users of Facebook as a social media platform perceive the data that we share on this platform, or how we lack to perceive it. As users, we do not seem to know enough about what happens to the information we share on Facebook, and many of the points in Wright’s text highlights this issue, the following quote as an example.

*“One of the fundamental properties of software is that once it is being executed it takes place on such a fine temporal and symbolic scale and across such a vast range of quantities of data that it has an intrinsically different materiality than that with which we are able to deal with unaided.“ (p. 79)*

In this quote, Wright points to the issue of data being inaccessible to us, but with visualization of data, this problem could be solvable. Most users do not have the privilege of knowing much about how Facebook works as a software and therefore most users seem to share personal information without regarding the possible consequences, perhaps because users see the visualization of their own data, but not the technology behind the act of sharing it.

In addition to the text by Richard Wright, I will also attempt to include points from multiple articles outside the curriculum, especially regarding why we as users choose to share personal information on Facebook. One articles that explores this issue is “Users’ Motivation in Sharing Information on Social Media” from 2017 by Afira Ghaisani, Putu Handayani and Qorib Munajat. This text is based on a study in Indonesia that investigates the motivation behind sharing information and is categorized into types; personal-, sensational-, political-, casual- and experience-information. Although the text is targeted in Indonesia, it is interesting how the authors have set out to study motivation, as the act of sharing personal information is different from user to user and depends on personal opinions.

In my exam paper, I will begin with an overview of the history of Facebook, and how the platform has developed and changed since the website launched in 2004. In addition to this, I will also attempt to explain some of the security issues that have surfaced through the years. I will base this overview on multiple texts outside the curriculum, including information from the webpage Wikipedia, that entails an overview of the history of creating Facebook, from its starting point as a simple website targeting students at the university of Harvard, to becoming the largest social media platform with millions of users from across the globe. Next, I will attempt to answer why users share information on Facebook and generate a discussion, highlighting the issue of the possible lack of users’ knowledge of what happens to their shared data and more specifically how Facebook handles this data. These questions lead to a further discussion of what the optimal solution for users on Facebook would be, regarding their sharing of data. How can users in Facebook be properly informed of what consequences that lie in sharing personal information and data, and is it necessary for users to know more about how data is handled, or should knowledge about Facebook as a software be accessible to all, and not just the engineers behind?

References

The following references are what I intend to base the majority of my exam paper on, but I also intend to research additional texts or articles, that can possibly highlight the points I will be trying to make.

* Richard Wright. (2008) *Data Visualization*. In *Software Studies: A Lexicon* by Fuller, Matthew. MIT Press. (p. 78-87)
* Afira Putri Ghaisani, Putu Wuri Handayani, Qorib Munajat. (2018) *Users’ Motivation in Sharing Information on Social Media*. Elsevier B. V.

The following links are articles that I may use as well.

This article contains multiple surveys on social media and user security and can be helpful in terms of the statistics available.

* “Social media security and trustworthiness: Overview and new direction”

<https://www-sciencedirect-com.ez.statsbiblioteket.dk:12048/science/article/pii/S0167739X16303879?_rdoc=1&_fmt=high&_origin=gateway&_docanchor=&md5=b8429449ccfc9c30159a5f9aeaa92ffb>

This article offers some of the same perspectives as the article listed above, but is from 6 years back, and therefore interesting in looking at what has been commented on social media security by this article compared to the one above.

# ”A review of social media security risks and mitigation techniques”

# [https://www-emeraldinsight-com.ez.statsbiblioteket.dk:12048/doi/full/10.1108/13287261211232180#](https://www-emeraldinsight-com.ez.statsbiblioteket.dk:12048/doi/full/10.1108/13287261211232180)

The following links are other articles that I might consider referring to in my exam paper:

* “The Facebook Data Center FAQ”

<http://www.datacenterknowledge.com/data-center-faqs/facebook-data-center-faq>

* “On social media, privacy is longer a personal choice” <https://www.sciencenews.org/blog/scicurious/social-media-privacy-no-longer-personal-choice>