

## Ethical Reflection

Ethics is characterized as beliefs an individual has that hold sway over their decisions regarding issues within society. Studying ethics in computing is paramount in deciding what a good or bad action is in the digital world. I will discuss my ethical standpoint on our topic – Data privacy in social media. And critically analyse and evaluate my conclusion to the ethics surrounding it. Which includes data mining and its significance around its opportunities, risks, and choices through its use by businesses, governments, and cybercriminals.

Brey and Søraker (2009) state the definition of computer ethics as a field in which applied ethics inscribe the issues relating to moral principles. Its application is present in the design, administration of information technology, and aspects of the beliefs one has on the morality and order of the public. Computer ethics was introduced in the 1970s by Walter Maner, he also encouraged the idea of adapting computer ethics into various schools' computer science curricula (Brey & Søraker, 2009). I believe studying ethics in computing is crucial, as computers can impact a lot in our society, whether this is influencing laws, policies, or actions. Brey and Søraker (2009) explain that the influential nature of computers in our society is due to their logical malleability, which is defined as the system that enables computers to execute any command given by a person, through an input that becomes transformed into an output. This facilitates its many uses across various sorts, these could be from business vendors, social media networks, and education applications to name a few (Brey & Søraker, 2009).

The opportunities that arise in data mining from data privacy in social media are great, because of its various uses in businesses, research, and government organisations. Because of this, I believe data mining is ethical, when in the use for good. For businesses, they can better attract more customers, which increases profits and overall marketability. Researchers can use data mining for good in the field of human-nature interactions formally known as conservation culturomics, where they can learn more about mankind. And its use by governments is key in aiding the safety and protection of its citizens by intervening in potential threats or accidents. These examples prove to show how data mining is capable of good for society. However, data mining also has the power to be used for the bad by cybercriminals for malicious purposes. I believe this prevailing negative leads data mining to be a morally neutral action, as it can be used for the good and the bad.

There are countless risks associated with data in social media, one of which is data privacy. My stance when it comes to the issue of cyber criminals and corrupt organisations, such as Cambridge Analytica abusing social media data is utilitarianism. Utilitarianism's central premise is that whether actions are morally right or wrong is determined by their consequences. More specifically, the only relevant effects of the actions are the good and bad outcomes created by them (Nathanson, n.d.). I take the stance of utilitarianism because I believe that the point of morality is to create a life where the good outweighs the bad. In the case of cyber criminals and corrupt organisations, I believe they should be charged with the consequences their unjust actions deserve.

When online, I believe the individual has very few options to keep their social media data safe. I say this because cybercriminals and corrupt organisations will always have the upper hand when it comes to the harm to unsuspecting online users' data. This is because they have the element of surprise, which is advantageous to a user who is unaware. However, the individual has the ability to not engage in online activities such as social media and they have the choice to hide their identity online. If the individual chooses this option, they are safe from the potential threat of their social data being stolen or misused.

To conclude, data mining within social media has implications relating to ethical issues. Furthermore, the opportunities data mining has for society is one that is great because of their potential to be used for the good. However, the issues that arise from data mining like its use by cybercriminals and corrupt organisations should be handled with appropriate consequences. To add, the risks with social media data should be noted by the user, should they wish to participate in social media, because of the reports of abuse by well-known mega corporations and malicious intent by cybercriminals.

**References:**

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