

What Was Privacy?

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Content

- At best he can, Logan Roots safeguards his privacy by living off the information grid
- Roots defines privacy as, “the freedom to selectively reveal one’s self”
- Most answers to the question, “what is privacy?” begin with the individual (usually a living one).
- Privacy is partly a form of self-possession - custody of the facts of one’s life
- Matters of personal health and finance
- We choose to keep matters as such close to us, until we decide otherwise
- Increasingly becoming uncontrollable to not leave “digital” footprints
- Now the question is, “What as privacy?”
- That personal information before to whoever it would be revealed to would treat it with care and consideration, and probably not harm them

Nuances

- Technical part is daunting
- Should be focused on compensating for human beings’ tendency to follow the paths for least resistance
- IT department needed
- IBM works with the nonprofit Eclipse Foundation, developing an open source project called Higgins.
- Higgins allows users to have a potentially anonymous online presence that mask their personal information while a reliable third party vouches for their legitimacy - paypal for identity.

Why Privacy Matters

One might conclude that privacy divides the world into optimists and pessimists.

Optimists trust that their information will be treated responsibly and with sensitivity; pessimists expect to be attacked by unethical or exploitative sharks.

That notion points us back to David Weinberger. Privacy is less a matter of

exerting control over our information than of expecting society to continually evolve solutions that allow us to live together in a more or less civilized state.

Privacy matters because the social fabric depends on it to a great extent.

Optimists expect reasonable norms to emerge naturally; pessimists may demand legal or regulatory solutions.

If businesses are perceived - either individually or monolithically - as disregarding reasonable norms, customers will notice and react.

References

- What Was Privacy