Humans have always been manipulated by others. It’s a biological trait, much like baby ducks following the leader (even if it’s a dog). “Subliminal advertising” or advertising manipulating the consumer into a particular action, has been documented back to the 1950’s according to <https://www.businessinsider.com/subliminal-ads-2011-5>.

This has obviously increased alongside technological advancements. However a huge issue that has not been addressed was the government’s role in data gathering. Thanks to the Patriot Act in 2001 a massive amounts of personal data became accessible to the government and its employees. What information they gained is not known to us mere mortals. According to the ACLU, the Patriot Act violates the US Constitution in several ways (<https://www.aclu.org/other/surveillance-under-usapatriot-act>) however it remains an active, ongoing Act.

If the government can gather information with impunity and without accountability, then it opens the door for non-governmental entities to perform similar actions. Yes, corporations must provide a privacy notice as part of the EULA, but due to the length of the contract, it is doubtful that many people read the contracts. Even if everyone read the contract, due to the jargon, it is infeasible to assume that they understand the contract. If I remember our Narrative course, the ideal communication technique for universal understanding would be at a 6th grade level - not at a JD level that requires another 15 years of schooling.