COSC244 - Data Ethics Assignment

Facebook is one the largest social media websites in the world. The amount of data gathered by Facebook is astronomical and the information gathered from individuals is a lot more than one would think. Facebook uses the data is gathers to promote ads and pages that relate to each individual, and it may be perceived as scary to think of how much information Facebook has on an individual. A person may see what information Facebook has gathered from them and can be downloaded, which I have done to convey my perspective on a range of points that are discussed in this essay.

Facebook organises information about an individual which as previously mentioned can be downloaded as the data is centralised. I have downloaded the data from my personal account as a way to determine how the information is structured and organised. The download contains information including messages, search history, login locations, and the list goes on. All that is required is to agree to the term and conditions and Facebook can store all that personal data, which may appear as an invasion of privacy based on the fact that they do not delete this data. The where_you're_logged_in.html file came as a shock to me as it stored my login locations from over a year ago. This may allow for a form of safety, as it allows Facebook to determine if your account has had suspicious activity perhaps from overseas. Despite this addition to security, there is a fear that this data could be used by others if the data is stolen.

In a principal sense all of Facebook's information comes from an individual and that information stored is based on the users actions on the platform, for example liking and following certain pages and content on Facebook will give them useful information about you and promote ads and pages that relate to the categories placed on for the individuals actions.

Reuben Sweetman-Gough   8271161

The example from my personal data is presented in

news_feed_topics_for_recommendations.html which influences what appears on my

Facebook feed based on categories like comedy and the Dallas Mavericks. In principle this

determines that information about a person is gathered from the way they interact with the

platform.

Facebook as an entity amasses a large amount of data, but one of the most contentious

issues is whether it is ethical to gather and store such a large amount of personal

information. For example Facebook is known to have sold users information to companies

as a way to make a profit, this presents a situation where Facebook may have too much

power which allows them to gather so much vital and personal data. your_off-

facebook_activity.html is another file aids the opinion that Facebook is unethical in their

gathering of data, as it shows all other websites which have been logged in with a Facebook

account. The selling of data to third-party companies that a user has interacted with aligns

with the gathered data as mentioned before, which leads to an unethical result of catering

ads to users to either sell items or push a political agender. Therefore a strong case can be

made that Facebook amassing such a large amount of personal data is unethical in nature.

In Conclusion Facebook amasses a lot of user data which becomes incredibly surprising

when looking specifically at how much data they gather from each individual. The storing of

every little decision a user makes and catering ads leads to the contentious issue of whether

a Facebook should be able to store so much personal data. Overall it appears rather

unethical for Facebook to be organising, storing and selling data of their users to third-party

companies.