# Assignment 4.1 Systems Theory Individual Assignment

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For my systems theory analysis, I chose the ethical situation of “a retailer selling your personal information to others for profit”. This situation brought up various ethical quandaries that I then address, identifying the ways each quandary impacts technical systems, socio-technical systems, and potentially some other type of systems. The main people that this situation impacted were consumers, corporations or data sellers, and data buyers. So, on the technical side of things, we notice that large infrastructures must be built and maintained in order to allow this transaction. This comes with obvious consequences, such as the need for security measures since any company with this powerful information could potentially be the source of a data leak. In addition, I identify many ways that this impacts the technical side of advertisements. Access to this data provides the ability to analyze and target people extremely efficiently. This can cause more people to install ad blockers and use other methods to opt out of data collection, which can cause issues for the design of some systems that companies have implemented. Overall, the buying and selling of data impacts the way designers look at how they store, display and keep secure information on their technical systems.

I also describe many impactful socio-technical problems. Among the main issues discussed is the effect of creating profiles based on the data that has been sold. Companies may be able to better serve their consumers based on better analytics and understandings of their consumer base. Often, this information is even given willingly to companies to help them improve their services or offer extra benefits to the community. This can lead to many good things like the ability to get help to someone who is at risk for some kind of health problem, only possible with the help of the data that was sold. However, the profiles and data rely on many assumptions, which can lead to them being inaccurate or misleading. This can cause increased threat from stereotypes, racism, and the life trajectory of humans. At worst, this could cause customer mistreatment, and the distrust of companies that collect data. Further distrust could come from the data breaches we have had in the past, which could even enable bad actors like doxxers to easily identify targets or get information they want. Overall, the grid shows that this ethical issue is very important to discuss and each quandary has far reaching implications for companies, small businesses, developers and consumers.