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Week 3: Privacy Rights

I believe in the inalienable right to data privacy on the Internet, full stop. It is one of our inherent civil liberties. Privacy is essential in a functional democracy.

In reality, I am aware that digital tools must collect data. I just think that it should be transient. I do believe that selling and storing our de-identified data is a violation of our privacy. For example, in an ideal world, if you use a navigation app such as Waze, your location should be used ONLY when traveling and deleted immediately thereafter. I do understand that we trade our privacy in exchange for using these "free" apps. I can accept that I am going to see stop suggestions such as Dunkin Donuts and Sunoco stations. What I cannot accept is that our location data is being compiled into massive databases and used or traded at a company's discretion.

I am absolutely infuriated about [Yahoo releasing their purportedly de-identified data set](#). History is repeating itself. In [2006 AOL released 3 months of search history](#) and it was easy to identify many of the "anonymous" users from their data. It didn't take a complicated algorithm to find the people from the data. -It just required common sense. I believe that Yahoo's intentions are good. They want to provide open-source data to researchers to train AI, but at what cost? Are we just to have faith that the people using citizens' data will only use it for the greater good? I just don't trust that everyone has the same value system as me. For example, ICE may want to find potential illegal immigrants from the data to put them in cages and/or deport them. They believe that their intentions are good. -That they are preventing domestic terrorism. I would find that abhorrent. We should have control over how our data is used.

Teaching Students about Data Privacy:

I've found that students are unaware of how much data they are sharing and how it is being stored. The first step in teaching them how to protect their privacy is illuminating the data they willingly give away.

I would start by discussing digital "footprints". This is the data that students knowingly post to the web via apps such as Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and Snapchat. -OR- Data they share via text or private message. Students often don't recognize that everything they post or send is permanent. Once you put those bits out there, you cannot control where they are saved. I would try to make them understand that future employers and their great-grandchildren can find the pictures that you willingly and publicly post from your boozy party and that nudes you sent can be posted without your consent by your angry ex.

I would then follow with a discussion about digital "fingerprints". This is less obvious to students. They are not usually concerned with location tracking, search history, and the

meta-data contained within the pictures they share. I feel the best way to tackle the fingerprints is to open with a discussion and then ask students to go view their Google Search history and review privacy settings. I hope students will be shocked or embarrassed to see the data that is collected about them. (I know I was.) My intention is to motivate students to be mindful about the data we don't see but willingly give away.