Laboratory Exercise 1: How Much is Your Data Worth?

1. Name three characteristics that increased the calculated value of your data and explain why you think those characteristics are of interest to marketers.

The three characteristics that increased the value of my data were:  
- Income level: Marketers are very interested in consumers with higher income because they have more purchasing power and are more likely to buy premium products or services.  
- Online shopping habits: This shows how frequently I purchase items online and what categories I usually buy from. It helps advertisers target me with similar products or services.  
- Social media usage: Frequent social media use provides marketers with insights into my preferences, interests, and engagement patterns, allowing them to deliver more personalized ads.

2. As an experiment, go through the calculator again as the future-you (whom you think you’ll be in ten years). Name three of the characteristics that made the biggest difference in the value of your data.

For the “future me,” the characteristics that made the biggest difference were:  
- Higher income bracket: As a working professional in the future, my financial status increases my data’s value because it suggests greater spending potential.  
- Home ownership: Owning property implies financial stability and the need for related services such as insurance, maintenance, and home improvement products.  
- Family status (having children): This characteristic makes my data more valuable since marketers can target family-related products such as education, groceries, healthcare, and entertainment.

3. Why do you think a marketer would be interested in someone with those characteristics?

Marketers are interested in individuals with these characteristics because they represent profitable consumer segments. Someone who owns a home, has a family, and earns a stable income is likely to make frequent and diverse purchases. These traits indicate long-term customer value and make it easier for companies to target specific life stages and needs through personalized marketing campaigns.

4. What do you think is the risk of such data leakage?

The main risks of data leakage include identity theft, financial fraud, and privacy invasion. When personal information like income, location, or online behavior is leaked, it can be misused by cybercriminals or unethical advertisers. It can also lead to unwanted targeted ads, scams, or even social engineering attacks. Ultimately, losing control of personal data reduces privacy and increases vulnerability to manipulation or exploitation.