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In today’s society companies are using the inputs of their users to create a “better” experience. However, many people believe that the methods that are being used raise many privacy concerns. Should companies be able to use likes on Facebook to choose what ads you see? Should companies be able to look at private information to deliver better services? The answer is complicated. It is true that companies should not be allowed to use private information to try to change emotions in a negative way and that they should not be allowed to monitor everything that people say and control what tools pop up like with the new Google Hangouts. However, some uses of the information can also be useful and helpful for people.

Companies should not be able to decide how to impact their user’s emotions in a negative way because it could have a very negative outcome. For example, Facebook should not have been allowed to use their ads to try to change the emotions of their users. When they gave negative ads to people, as stated in “Facebook's Newsfeed Study: Was It Ethical Or A Violation Of Privacy?”, the company could have negatively affected depressed people. They could have driven people with depression further into a depressed state. The company said that they had an outside review group that reviewed the experiment, but it turned out that they did not. This is one abuse of power that can lead to destructive results. Companies would also face legal issues for their abuse of power, because they are legally responsible for their experiments (Loui and Miller 3). Companies should have regulations that prevent them from performing experiments like this one because of the emotional and psychological effects that it could have.

Companies should also not be allowed to monitor everything said in order to adjust what tools pop up or control things like “likes” on Facebook. For example, with Google Hangouts, if people wanted a tool to pop up when someone asked their location, the person should be able to control if a location app popped up, not the program or AI. This “tool” can become more of an annoyance than a useful shortcut for people. Companies should not charge for things that amount to fake likes or assume that people would want ads and tools to pop up when certain phrases are typed.

Even though companies should not be allowed to perform unethical experiments or control completely the tools that pop up, there are still some useful programs and algorithms that are created from monitoring input. People that use the Google search engine are inputting data that is being used to try to analyze and predict what someone else may enter by the key phrase or the beginning of the phrase. This can be a useful tool because it allows for people to quickly search for what they need, and it is not a violation of privacy because the people are inputting the information into a public data base in order to get something out. Posts to Facebook can also be used to some extent to control what ads are seen. An example would be, that if someone posted about kittens or animals then an ad that could be given to them would be for wildlife organizations or pet stores. This would not be a violation of privacy because people are sharing their thoughts with others, and that can be used to a small extent to control their ad experience. As is stated in the Bible “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.” (Eph 4:29). This means that people should only put online what can be used to lift others up and help people out, not things that are meant to bring people down or hurt them.

Overall, there should be regulations on what companies can use and look at to determine what is given to the user. They should be restricted from performing experiments on people without consent and should not be allowed to deliberately control ads for research. However, companies can use some algorithms that can allow for easier use of search engines or to find ads that are more relevant to their needs in life.

Works Cited

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