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Information Explosion, AI, and Privacy

Many aspects of the twentieth century are very dystopian and few people realize this notion. People are cyborgs due to their complete reliance on phones and computers and the accidental selling of their privacy. Giant corporations such as Facebook and Google have a monopoly on people's private information and it is a huge evergrowing problem. While obtaining certain information from users is not necessarily negative, the secretiveness and massive extent these corporations go to are unethical and dangerous.

However, the internet would not exist as it does today without companies taking user information; this means that the use of user information can be beneficial if used correctly. Many don't realize how many websites such as Google or YouTube are free. The cause of this is the use of advertisements, which can be tailored to a user depending on information taken from the company. Generally, it is beneficial for companies such as Google to store your search history, views, and webpage usage. These things do not need to be private and are not dangerous to the user. Google and other websites only remain free if this information is taken for tailored ads. Users are freely inputting this information into the company's domain so it is their right to use it. It is also beneficial because it can discourage people from looking up immoral subjects such as porn or anything on the black market.

The horrible privacy issue appears when these companies start to take information from outside their domain. One horrendous thing that Facebook did, as described in Josh

Constantine's article "Facebook pays teens to install VPN that spies on them", is that the company paid unknowledgeable people for complete access to all of their private information (TechCrunch). They had access to private texts, photos, search history, audio recordings, and much more. Facebook vigorously fought for their ability to steal people's private information which gives insight into the evil of the company itself. The apostle Paul would say to Facebook, "'I have the right to do anything,' you say—but not everything is beneficial. 'I have the right to do anything'—but not everything is constructive. No one should seek their own good, but the good of others." (1 Corinthians 10: 23-4).

One of the more scary privacy concerns that these companies create is the fact that they can listen to your daily life through device microphones. The infamous Amazon Alexa is the most obvious contributor to this. The company claims that it only records information after the keyword "Alexa" is said, but as stated in Grant Clauser's article "Amazon's Alexa Never Stops Listening," this is not always the case. The article states that Amazon and other companies go beyond their domain and know what music you listen to, what you buy, when you are home, and even what room you are in. Alexa recognizes individual voices and has been reported to record and send private conversations. Even your smartphones do this to some extent. Have you ever noticed after talking about a product with someone you immediately find that your device starts sending you ads for that product? That is no coincidence, your phone secretly listens to your every word.

In conclusion, while storing limited user data is extremely beneficial to the internet, it is not hard for companies to go way too far. So much of our privacy has been violated by these giant corporations and it is about time that something is done about it.

Works Cited

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