

When the internet gave rise to social media, shared personal information along with its value quickly became apparent, and it is only becoming more valuable as people spend greater amounts of time on the internet doing a wider variety of activities. Personal information regarding potential customers is particularly valuable to companies, so selling information to others seems smart to partake in. Companies can better understand customers by leveraging this information and thus increase revenue.

However, making sense of what is going on behind the scenes is no easy task for the customer, making them vulnerable subjects on the internet. In my opinion, this is where the actual ethical quandary lies. Companies can imply that their information is being sold or bury it in a privacy policy that only lawyers can understand, doing all that they can to hide or positively reframe what they are really doing with your personal information in an effort to protect their ability to sell personal information. So, it's less about the fact that personal information is being sold and more about the sneaky lack of transparency surrounding it. That's the real source of customer privacy and autonomy being compromised.