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ENCS 393 AA

June 18th, 2018

Security Versus Privacy

In the last two decades these two concepts have become seemingly polar opposites. How can we have the luxury to scroll a news feed without fear of our homes being taken with know no knowing the random thoughts that we google at 2am? It seems every piece of the online world, from the operating system, browser, internet service provides, the CSA, every single government agency, the NSA, the KGB, the destination website, and that nerd who send you a phony email that’s been spying for your credit card information… Everyone has their hands in the proverbial cookie jar which is identic to your identity and all your personal information. Does this really help keep the country safe? Does this prevent school shootings from happening or other terrorist attacks? For precision the security concept discussed here is on a national level, no one claims spying on citizens is to prevent small crimes; “keeping Canadians safe from treats abroad or at home” is a good paraphrase which explains the idea. The other half of this discussion is privacy which will be focused on privacy of personal information; a prime example is the Cambridge Analytica scandal on the shoulders of Facebook who unknowingly gave away several hundreds of millions of identities away. The internet has become a tool for us to share, connect and communicate with others we are close to and those on the other side of the world, however its also been the tool for those who wish to do harm to others, giving them access to all information they might need to build a bomb. Therefore, there is a need for some monitoring to identify those who pose a risk for committing violent acts, which implies some degree of spying on personal information. Yet everyone seems to be collecting your information and selling it to the anyone for market analysis. Why is everything about you available for sale online? Do we allow, or consent for this to happen? One can’t help but wonder how much of our identity is owed by someone else? The link between governments protected its citizens through gathering information of the internet and internet companies tracking everything we do is from the laws the governments are putting emplace to allow themselves access also gives access to private interest.

So here we have it; whenever we access the internet everything we do is saved, tracked, and builds an identity of us but is this cost worth the level of protection to our home land security from attacks from within or abroad. It is very common for anything we say to pop up as an ad and its that in-depth knowledge of us that in the wrong hands could be very dangerous.

Judging the morality of this topic requires applying a formal theory of morality. Approaching this subject from a utilitarian point of view, we can judge the ethical issue by evaluating the outcome of pleasure from the position of an aggregate. For this thought exercise we will focus on Canadians who have a free high access to internet percentage and a very low number of terrorist incidents. First off, its very surprising despite every Facebook user agree to the terms and conditions for their information to be collected and owed by Facebook, very few Canadians know that’s actually what’s going on. It’s mostly due to the cultural epidemic where not reading those conditions is normal. Since a large portion have no clue what’s going on, their level of pleasure is unaffected. This leaves a majority of the population aware of the privacy breach to various degree, however since it does not stop many people from using the internet it id safe to conclude the discomfort from having everything you do tracked is very minimal on average, but most would call it concerning or irritating. On the flip side of this are the lives saved from preventing terrorist attacks but how many lives are save? Do Canadians feel safer? Does this translate to pleasure? There are very few statistics on the number of incidences that are prevent from information gathering, the suspicious is that the disclosure would include the scale of the domestic spying. None the less there is no evidence to suggest that Canadians feel safer with all their personal information being saved in datacenters, in fact there is a small coefficient suggest we actually feel less safe, more at risk, with the possibility of loss of identity. This all sums up to a null-sum where any small gain of pleasure gained from the increase of security is negated by the decrease of pleasure which rises from the fear of identity theft. The end result is a large portion of the population who is displeased from the uncomforted with the vast amount of their information being kept by private companies. By this end result the utilitarian would classify the misuse of the internet to gather personal information is an immoral action because the compound effect on pleasure to those involved are negative.

The second way to judge the morality of this usage of this information and communication technology is through the lens of deontology and the formula of ends in itself. This methodology involves determining consent of all parties and whether or jot someone is being used as a end or just a mere means. Internet service companies and using the millions of people as a mere means to meet bottom lines by offer information to ad agencies. The more difficult quest is do Canadians consent to the gathering of their personal information. Using these websites like Facebook and google you agree to the services because you made an account or followed the hyperlink to the terms and conditions and agreed to all the legal garaging. The fact of the matter is you most likely didn’t even notice the blue underlined text because you are so conditioned to clicking okay without knowing. If this was a bank loan or an important legal contract, would you have read and understand everything before signing your life away? Well sure you took the same seriousness when making your Facebook account.