Eva Aussems, Arnaud Loonstra, Beryl Noë

SHITLOAD OF DATA

Artefact has many meanings, the most commonly used however is "a man-made object" derived from the latin words *arte* "by skill" and *factum* "thing made". The term is often used in archaeology to designate the objects found in excavations. Perhaps it is because of this historical connotation that we most often think of artefacts as physical and tangible objects. With the definition we accepted however, the term artefact can also designate virtual things provided they are man-made. [1]

The biggest and most relevant virtual creation of mankind is perhaps the world wide web. Since it's conception in 1990, it has continuously influenced the world in many ways and still continues to do so. It has become a primary living standard many of us wouldn't want to live without, it has brought freedom of speech, and many other good things, but it has also served as tool to collect and distribute enormous amounts of data.

A common way to collect private data in the first place is to offer free, attractive services such as an email box, a profile on a social network, or a discount service etc. On the basis of this method of data acquisition, we have come to formulate the following statement:

You cannot keep your data private for free.

As consumers and users, we love free things. But we often fail to see that money is not the only payment method as the companies providing "free" services are not providing these out of philanthropy. They may use any data of us using their services. "Big Data" is the collective term for processing and analysing enormous datasets. This innovation enables automated information associations not seen before. If combined with personal data this creates a rich source of information about individuals. Do individuals realize this? [2][3][4][5]

The gathering and further distribution of private data is something web users are increasingly aware of. They have thoughts and opinions about it, they have pointed their finger at companies and governments. But did they act upon these things on a personal level?

In the installation we are planning to make, we want to confront visitors with a very direct choice: pay and keep your privacy or don't and allow data about your use of the provided service to be collected. But how do we get this message across and really get people to think more than the 3 seconds people take to decide to download a new application? We decided that we needed something shocking and provocative. So we thought to take away the privacy of our most private moment of the day?

The service we chose to use to confront the exhibition visitors with our statement are the toilets. The data collected of those who chose not to pay are gathered (fictitiously) by the analysis of the user's bodily excretions.

The installation will be divided into 3 parts: (i) the toilets, (ii) a data visualisation installation, and (iii) the presence of the Company.

I. The Toilets

There are two toilets. Rather than being divided into "Man" and "Woman" toilets, they are now separated as "Paid" and "Free". The use of both toilets requires prior signing of the Toilets Terms of Service at the lavatory attendant's table. The Terms of Service document explains the difference between the two toilets. The "Paid" toilet is a regular toilet, for which exhibition visitors have to pay 50 euro cents to use. The "Free" toilet is sponsored by a Company which collects data from your bodily excretions of your toilet use in return of offering you the service of a free toilet. Furthermore, as to attract clientèle for this sponsored toilet, additional entertainment (toilet literature, quiz book, music, etc.) and comfort (air freshener, perfumed candles, toilet rug, etc.) is provided. On the other hand, the paid toilet is plastered with advertising (including for the Company). The users of the sponsored toilet additionally receive an id number from the lavatory attendant as to help them recognize their own data set at the data visualisation installation.

II. The data visualisation installation

The data visualisation installation consists of 4 screens each showing stock exchange-like tables and graphs. These show details (id number, timestamp, hair colour, height, etc.) in which the user of the sponsored toilet can recognize himself. Moreover, the system shows its verdict on the individual's health status (healthy/unhealthy). The exhibition visitors can also see how their and other individual's data is sold to care insurers and other big companies.

This is the part that is meant to shock visitors and prompt them to think about the costs of their privacy. The test of our concept has shown that people generally show much enthusiasm for free stuff until it is clear that data of their bodily excretions is retrieved in exchange. The comparison between such a bathroom and a internet service such as gmail was generally found to be relevant. However, they did find the data collecting toilet more scary than the internet service even if both can find the same information about you. We therefore expect the same kind of reaction during the exhibition and hope the visitors will remember our provoking comparison in the future when they sign up for more free internet services.

III. The presence of the Company

The Company is advertised in posters in the restroom and mentioned in the Terms of Service, it is the company that collects your data in return for a free visit to the toilets.

A clear visual link to the company is also made in the data visualisation installation

to trigger visitors to link the events happening around the toilets and the screens showing data being sold.

The role of the difference between the two toilets and the advertising is to show how big the interest of the Company is to get the visitors' private data and how much he is willing to invest in order to get it. We want to attract attention to the fact that what is happening in our installation is not irrealistic at all considering what is happening with Big Data on the world wide web. We hope that the visitors that will experience our work will go home thinking more critically of their choices and what effect they may have.

[1] Artefact. (n.d.). In Oxford Dictionaries. Retrieved from http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/artefact
[2] Centre for International Governance Innovation & Ipsos (2014). CIGI-Ipsos Global Survey on Internet Security and Trust. Retrieved from: https://www.cigionline.org/internet-survey
[3] Hoftijzer, K. (2014, November 4). Slim gebruik van klantdata resulteert in besparing in tijd & geld. Marketingfacts. Retrieved from http://www.marketingfacts.nl/berichten/slim-gebruik-van-klant data-resulteert-in-besparing-in-tijd-geld
[4] IBM (n.d.). Big Data. Retrieved from http://www.ibm.com/big-data/us/en/
[5] Madden, R. (2014, November 12). Public Perceptions of Privacy and Security in the Post-Snowden Era. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/11/12/public-privacy-perceptions/