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Privacy Paper

When I think of privacy, I think of the right and ability I have to live my life without interference. There are situations, which I accept, where my privacy isn't as private as I would like. For example, the iPhone that I use for everyday things was issued to me by my employer. That gives them the right to monitor my phone usage or even look at my text messages. But, that is okay because it was part of an agreement when I received my phone. The same also applies for my work laptop where I am to use it for work and limit my personal use. Privacy is and always will be a hot topic and from my perspective it always appears as an emotional one as well. This week we discuss and reflected on Apple's current fight with the FBI and in allowing a backdoor into the iPhone operating system. I read another student's response where the Government may very well be taking advantage of an emotional situation to gain access whereas American's would have fought back more had there not been a terrorist attack. When 9/11 happened it was a terrible thing, a terrorist attack is never a good thing but this paved the way for the Patriot Act and Americans rallied toward any action against terrorism at the forfeit of some of their basic rights like Privacy.

Growing up I did not think of privacy too much, as a child of the 90's I did not grow up with social media networks or even a cellular device. If wanted to use the computer I had to ask my parents' permission and they could monitor my limited internet activity and monitor what programs, I was accessing. However, when I was about 9 years old my younger brother and I (who was 7) did manage to guess my father's password to his computer. I imagine he had not expected his children to use his computer without asking or without permission so the password was simply our last name. In accessing his computer without permission and technically violating his privacy my brother and I had not intended

anything malicious by it, we just wanted to use the scanner to upload some sketches we had done. If you look at the same situation from a different perspective, say if I had been a teenager trying to get online to access my Facebook or AOL Instant Messenger then that is seen a lot differently than a younger child using the computer without permission. The concept of privacy also changes as you get older. For example, when I was younger privacy was absolutely something that I respect and I still respect it of course but doing something like using my father's computer without permission was something that brought more fear to me as a child than as an adult. As I grow older, I value privacy a lot more.

In the current age cell phones are very popular as is social media and this can cause problems in youth as they don't clearly see the value of privacy or even the dangers. Personally, I didn't discover a lot of the privacy settings on Facebook until recently and I looked into them deeper after I watched a documentary on Netflix called "Terms and Conditions May Apply". This documentary opened my whole view on privacy especially when relating to the Internet. I find myself, as a result, being more cautious and careful about what I post on the Internet because it will never really go away. I am hesitant to share personal information on such a large scope and would rather limit it to a smaller group of close friends or family. I assume that most teenagers are not aware that what they delete off their Twitter or Facebook is not really deleted and many parents are cautious of their children's usage of social media. I always had the question in the back of my mind whether the privacy rights of a minor are the same as an adult. Should a parent be allowed access to their child's Facebook if they request that from Facebook or Twitter? What if they want access to their child's iPhone? Would that prompt Apple to make that backdoor if a child was missing versus if the FBI was asking for a backdoor in a terrorist-related investigation? I know that is something I would like to do more research on, especially since I plan to have my own family in the future.

I have been doing more reading and research and from what I can gather the United States Government will sometimes use events such as 9/11 to push something forward. I think of Pearl Harbor and how the United States entered a World War even though the U.S. had maintained an isolationist stance for the years before their entry. I also think about arguments such as “if you have nothing to hide, then what is the problem?” And in a sense I agree with that. I am not participating in illegal activities or doing anything inappropriate with my cell phone or on the Internet. However, if the Government was screening my text messages or phone calls I would not want something I said off hand to create a response from the Government. If I make a joke and mention something related to terrorism or a message is interpreted as a threat and taken out of context, then that could place me in trouble.

As an online student I value my privacy when I am communicating with my classmates whether it is through an individual chat, a group chat or a video chat. That is our time to collaborate and study and share our opinions on the subject at hand.

I believe the strongest factor that contributed to my view on privacy was the fact that I grew up with 2 younger siblings and also as the only girl. I always had my own room, my own things, I rarely had to share with my younger brother’s as they had their toys and I had mine. I had a diary as a kid and nobody read it as it was my personal item. My parents respected that privacy for a long time but what also comes with privacy is trust. I lost my parents’ trust for a long time and with that I lost my privacy as well and that was difficult because it was not something that I was used to. All the work I had to put in to gain that trust back and my privacy made sure that it was not something that I took for granted anymore and I work hard to maintain my relationships of trust to maintain my privacy where I need it. Without privacy, I believe that people would be limited. Speaking from the perspective of an introvert I enjoy my alone time to think and gather my thoughts. If I did not have that privacy then my anxiety would not let me gather my thoughts and I would not reach conclusions or grow as a person as I needed to.

I have read information on the issue of the NSA spying on Americans and I do believe that is wrong but I understand the reasons they felt that had to conduct domestic surveillance. As an American citizen we see that we are being spied on but as the Government has noted they have prevented Terrorist attacks, it is hard to quantify something that has not happened and it is easy instead to quantify an attack when it does happen as in the case of 9/11 and the San Bernardino attacks. I still do not agree with the policy or policies that stand behind it—but can understand the reason that they have given us for their actions.

I believe that privacy is something that most people place a great value on and I can see the evidence in the development of Social Media and the increased interest in privacy settings on these Social Media sites. There is also increased interest due to the involvement of Hackers and the leaking of data or the hacking of networks such as online stores or banks. I still feel relatively safe with everything being online and the increase of the usage of the internet for banking, shopping, etc. I feel privacy is also up to me—I can choose what I post on Facebook and Twitter and I can also choose what I shop for online. I can choose to not online bank and I can choose to not have a cell phone, it would be extremely inconvenient in 2016 and moving forward but it is still a choice especially if I felt my privacy was being threatened or I did not trust an institution. Trust and privacy go hand in hand and currently I do trust my privacy being protected when I online bank and shop online as well, and when that trust is broken I will reevaluate my views on Privacy as well.