


CS 3001-A: Computing, Society, and Professionalism

Munmun De Choudhury | Associate Professor | School of Interactive Computing

Week 6: Privacy II
February 14, 2024




Perspectives on Privacy



Today's Class – why violation of
privacy is an ethical challenge



Information Disclosures



The newfound privacy conundrum presented by installing a device that can literally listen to everything you're saying represents a chilling new development in the age of internet-connected things. By buying a smart speaker, you're effectively paying money to let a huge tech company surveil you. And I don't mean to sound overly cynical about this, either. Amazon, Google, Apple, and others say that their devices aren't spying on unsuspecting families. The only problem is that these gadgets are both hackable and prone to bugs.

– Gizmodo about Amazon Echo/Google Home etc.

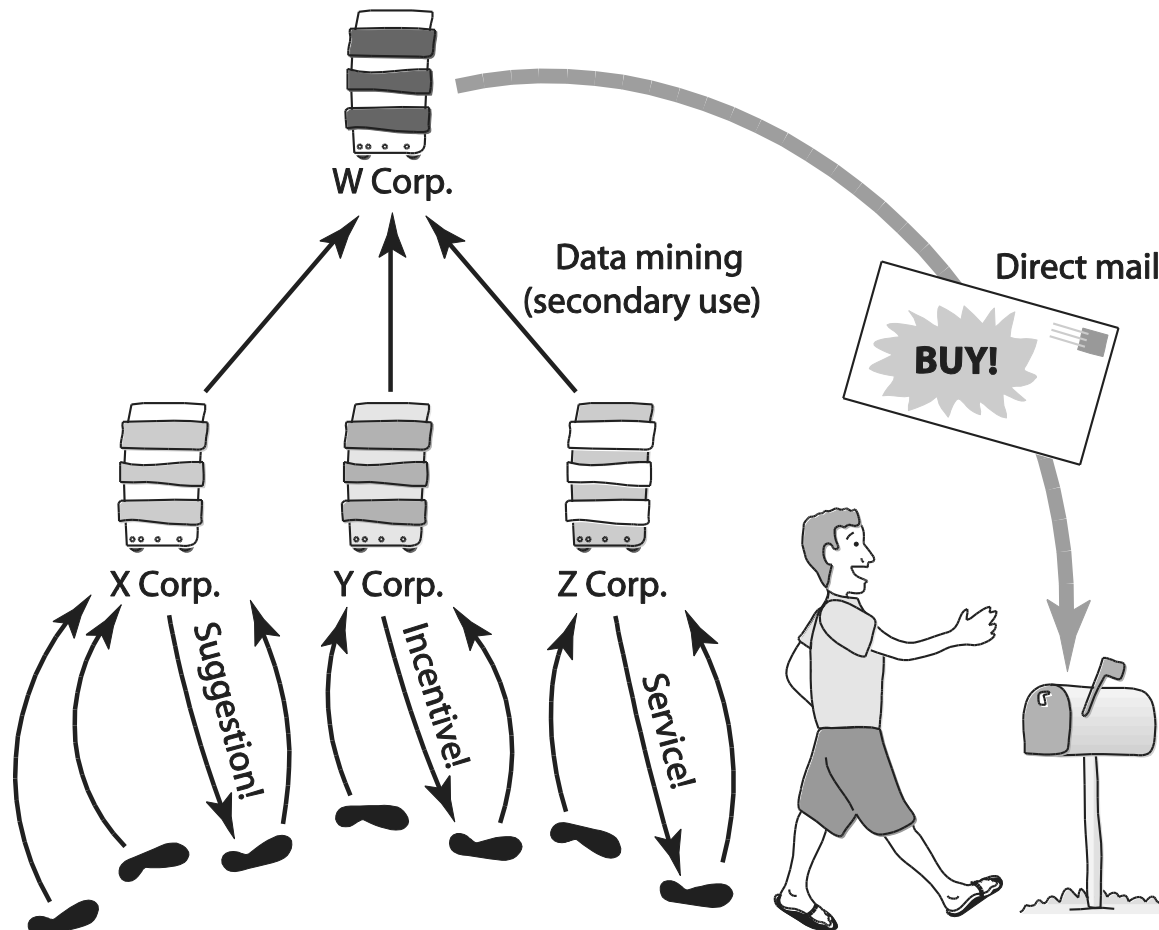



Could using Alexa or
Google Home result in a
violation of privacy?



AI/Machine Learning

Secondary Uses of Information





How is secondary information
used? Some examples...



Google's Personalized Search



Collaborative Filtering



Microtargeting



Credit Reports

How Target Figured Out A Teen Girl Was Pregnant Before Her Father Did

Class Discussion: Facial Recognition

- What are the advantages of face recognition?
 - For the blind?
 - For police?
 - For counter-terrorism?
 - For advertisers?
 - For ordinary people?
- What are the risks of face recognition?
 - For use by police?
 - Some cities have outlawed its use by police. Is this wise?
 - For use by totalitarian regimes?



Sharing of Anonymized Datasets

POLICY —

“Anonymized” data really isn’t—and here’s why not

Companies continue to store and sometimes release vast databases of " ...

NATE ANDERSON - 9/8/2009, 7:25 AM



The Massachusetts Group Insurance Commission had a bright idea back in the mid-1990s—it decided to release "anonymized" data on state employees that showed every single hospital visit. The goal was to help researchers, and the state spent time removing all obvious identifiers such as name, address, and Social Security number. But a graduate student in computer science saw a chance to make a point about the limits of anonymization.

Latanya Sweeney requested a copy of the data and went to work on her "reidentification" quest. It didn't prove difficult. Law professor Paul Ohm describes Sweeney's work:


“

At the time GIC released the data, William Weld, then Governor of Massachusetts, assured the public that GIC had protected patient privacy by deleting identifiers. In


Netflix Prize

AOL Search Dataset





Almost all information can be “personal”
when combined with enough other
relevant bits of data



Privacy from the Individual Perspective (Acquisti et al 2015)

What should the individual be doing?

Individualistic Approach – privacy is a private good

- Trust people's ability to make self-interested decisions
 - The “Get over it” brigade
 - Zuckerbollocks – privacy is a private good (O'Hara 2013)

Individualistic Approach – privacy is a private good


- With respect to the individualistic approach, scholars question people's ability to manage privacy amid increasingly complex trade-offs

TECHNOLOGY

Suicide hotline shares data with for-profit spinoff, raising ethical questions

The Crisis Text Line's AI-driven chat service has gathered troves of data from its conversations with people suffering life's toughest situations.





Are individuals up to the challenge
of navigating privacy in the
information age?

Privacy as a public good?

- Even when the individual would rather be transparent and open to scrutiny, exposure will affect others.
- Accountability
- Security
- Trading data and market efficiency
- Chilling effects

KEITH PORCARD IDEAS FEB 1, 2022 3:04 PM

The Real Harm of Crisis Text Line's Data Sharing

People who need help have access to a growing number of advice and care tools—some helpful, some harmful. Consumer protections need updating.



EU's "Right to be Forgotten"

- Also known as the "right to erasure", the rule gives EU citizens the power to demand data about them be deleted.

← → ↻ 🔒 newyorker.com/magazine/2014/09/29/solace-oblivion

Subscribe for \$4 a month.

THE
NEW YORKER

ANNALS OF LAW SEPTEMBER 29, 2014 ISSUE

THE SOLACE OF OBLIVION

In Europe, the right to be forgotten trumps the Internet.



By Jeffrey Toobin

September 22, 2014

EU's "Right to be Forgotten"

- Google had argued that the obligation could be abused by authoritarian governments trying to cover up human rights abuses were it to be applied outside of Europe.

 [bbc.com/news/technology-49808208](https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-49808208)

Technology

Google wins landmark right to be forgotten case

By Leo Kelion
Technology desk editor

 24 September 2019



 Share

Privacy as a public good

- Need to balance the interests of the subjects of data against the power of commercial entities and governments holding that data