

Privacy is an illusion

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“There is more private information in your phone, than in your home.”

An advertisement by Apple.

Now, how many of you have wondered, your phone might have a secret microphone catching every conversation you had?

In the 21 century, technology has improved more than ever. We have, the self-driving car, bluetooth, the first ever humanoid robot Sophia who even received citizenship and who could forget the most sensational innovation of all time; social media. Social media is now able to adapt to every individual in their own taste. For example, someone who gives a like on a post about “trendy clothes” would receive an advertisement about fashion. Social media has somehow managed to provide every individual with a personal system satisfying their every need and desire.

Today 2.89 billion people have access to social media. This is more than half of the global internet usage. Consumers of social media establish their own mini society using Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook along with others. We post and upload videos of ourselves just to give a sneak peek of what we are up to. What we are not aware of is that while doing so, we are providing valuable data to certain companies. They analyse these data and can tell your gender, where you live, your political preference and even how much you trust the people you know and how strong these relationships are.

Cambridge Analytica a political consulting firm has used these tactics to “change audience behaviour.” The company provides service to business and political parties to do just that. They claim by analysing data they can combine the data with behavioural science which leads them to understand the consumers personality. They would then be exposed to what behaviours that individual would take in certain situations. Their purpose is to persuade or even manipulate others into thinking a certain way their client wants.

The source of their data came from a simple questionnaire before logging

in or signing into Facebook. Not only of the person who took the quiz but his or her Facebook friends', personal information such as messages were exposed to the company. It was estimated that 270,000 Facebook users participated in the questionnaire, leading 87 million Facebook users data provided to the company without their consent. It was not until 2018 that citizens discovered the truth that their unauthorized data, was being used by a company they didn't even know existed.

These companies exist because they understand that we rely on social media pretty much all the time. They know that our most personal information is just right in our pockets. They know that social media would have a greater effect on us more than we acknowledge. They know that with social media, they could control us.

Privacy is an illusion. Our thoughts are swiftly changed by social media numerous times and the worst part is that we don't even recognize it. Companies that are exposed to our data can analyse our private characteristics and features predicted from digital records of human behaviour. As the generation surrounded by social media, we need to understand that social media is not a tool that gives you answers but a tool to help you seek an answer. We must be aware that social media is not just adjusting to our preference because they want to help us, but because they can benefit from it. Social media is dominating our thoughts. As Author Erik Qualman said

“we do not have a choice on whether we DO social media, the question is how well we DO it.”

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