

Vanishing boundaries of digital privacy

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Your only recollection is that a few days ago, you had exchanged a text with your friend about getting together for a quick morning chat. From that single exchange of information, the ever-helpful and always-listening ubiquitous virtual assistant has set up a new routine, without giving away much to let you know of the steps it has taken. Would you consider this convenience as a breach of your privacy? Sure, there is no human contact involved in this, but what if it was done by an unknown person?

Let's take a different approach altogether in visualising this — how

HUMAN RIGHT

Privacy is a fundamental human right, as mentioned by the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and in many other international and regional treaties. Interest in the right of privacy increased in the 1960s and 1970s with the advent of information technology. The surveillance potential of powerful computer systems prompted demands for specific rules governing the collection and handling of personal information.

The text book definition of *Privacy in the Internet age* goes along the lines of stating the concept as a claim of

and government agencies are able to find out highly detailed personal information about individuals with unprecedented ease.

Internet technology has posed new challenges for the protection of individual privacy. Any information that is sent over this vast network may pass through many different computer systems before it reaches its intended final destination. Each of these systems is capable of monitoring, capturing, and storing communications that pass through it.

It has not been an overnight development in blurring the lines between virtual and real-life privacy, but the progress has been astonishingly fast. From the rise of Facebook as the all-engulfing social media platform, and the hub of connectivity to the smart devices that capture, record, and attempt to predict a particular behaviour of the user — there is no end to the possibilities of how a person can be exploited digitally in the cyberspace.

SURVIVING AS A NON-TECHIE

Being technologically handicapped and trying to lead a modern life in 2020 is as good as being unvaccinated and wandering in a disease stricken area. There is simply no way around being connected and using the digital communication platforms to get-by every day.

But there is one fact you have to accept when you partake in this 'connection.' From cell phones to the home, and office computers and devices, right down to the so-called smart devices to make your life less difficult, you are leaking information about yourself in miniscule to somewhat large chunks.

Ask yourself this: do you really need a device to open up curtains in the morning, and does your refrigerator really need to be controlled by your smart phone? Also, do you have to make

your smartphone a witness to your many activities throughout the day which you would not dare to let a single living soul know of? That Wi-Fi connection with no password might be tempting and have excellent connectivity — but are you sure you want to use it?

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As the situation stands, one may feel a wave of despair engulfing them, as just about every connection to the Internet is a potential for breaching one's privacy and security, both online and offline. However, technology itself is not the problem, it is how you use it, and more importantly, who is at the other end that matters most. It's not only criminals who are interested in getting their hands on your data. The problem grows further when the devices serve the companies who made them rather than the people who purchased them. And as our everyday vehicles and our habitats, our jewellery and our kitchen appliances become equipped with digital connections and capabilities, the question of control becomes only more significant.

While companies are not looking to hack your password, they want to know a lot about you. From your buying patterns to how you travel, and how you utilise your time, and what attracts your attention in a particular website — these are all vital variables to achieve maximum profit for the companies out there. And they will target every possible grey area in the rules and conditions of cyberspace to reach and extract information from their target audience. In short, your online identity is being constantly impinged upon, probed, evaluated, examined, and recorded.

Then, there are all the social networking sites and services, which are the lifeblood of 21st century life and communication. The year 2019's

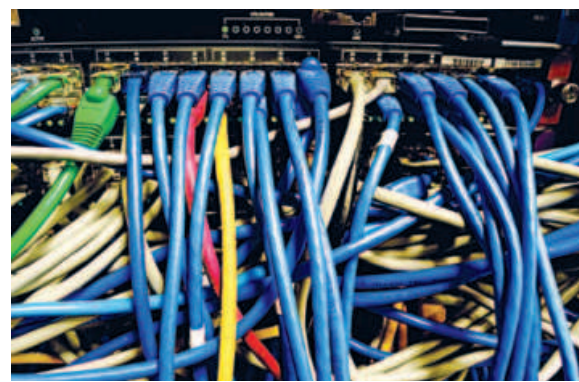
BANGLADESH IN THE AGE OF DIGITAL PRIVACY

The world's first data privacy statute was passed in Hesse (a German "lander" or state) in 1970; the United States followed suit shortly thereafter when it included privacy protections in the Fair Credit Reporting Act in 1971.

The first comprehensive national legislation on data protection came from Sweden in 1973; those laws became a model for not just European countries, but also countries around the world. Since then, privacy laws to protect online data have been passed across the globe, some of which have international implications. The approach taken by the specific country implementing the laws, however, differs according to the culture to which that country subscribes.

Considering the number of Internet users in Bangladesh, which was reported to be 87.790 million (roughly a few million less than the population of Germany) at the end of June, 2018 by the BTRC; the privacy of internet users needs more attention than ever.

In Bangladesh, The Digital Security Act, 2018 ("DSA"), which came into force on 8 October, 2018, was enacted to ensure digital security and to identify, block, prevent, trial digital crimes, etc. This Act is commonly known as the Cyber Security Act in other jurisdictions, and aims to promote confidentiality, integrity, and availability of public and private information systems and networks with the goal to protect individuals' rights and privacy, economic interests and security in the cyberspace.



much are you willing to give up about yourself to use technology and make the best use of its benefits? Opening an account for minimum services anywhere requires you to enter your personal details, which may include mandatory fields asking about your location, age, and address. Add to the fact that these are stored and analysed by machines with little to no human contact for purposes unknown or buried underneath roughly sixteen pages of "Terms and Conditions of Usage."

DIGITAL LOOPHOLES OF A

individuals to be left alone, free from surveillance or interference, from other individuals or organisations, including the state.

Advances in data storage techniques and rapidly declining storage costs have been responsible for maintaining a database on individuals by private and public organisations. These advances in data storage have not only made the routine violation of individual privacy cheap, but effective as well. Furthermore, advances in data analysis techniques for large pools of data is another technological trend that heightens ethical concerns. Profit mongering companies,

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