Strategic Foresight and Innovation

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# Privacy in the Data Age: Synthesis Map

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# 1 PRIVACY IN THE DATA AGE

Humans rely on social media platforms to connect with family and friends, get updates on the latest news, and even shop online. On the other hand, social platforms rely on keeping users engaged to ensure a steady revenue stream.
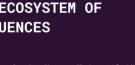
A story of power and influence

## HUMANS

Human needs that revolve around love, belonging, and self-esteem can be fulfilled through social media and messaging services.

These services have become an essential part of everyday life, because they are "free" in most cases, are very simple to use, and over time have been integrated together.

### SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Social media and messaging services aim to make money by selling ads on their platforms. They rely on user engagement to add more targeted ads. In return, they promise Connection, Convenience, and Entertainment.

### Exploitation of user privacy

Social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, were designed to exploit human vulnerability. Humans seek social validation and often find themselves stuck in a feedback loop when they continuously use social media in their lives.

### Dead-end sign ups

There is a cost to accepting terms & conditions before signing up for a social media or messaging service. That cost often involves giving up a fundamental human right — privacy.

Users vary from a range of ages and have been using these social media platforms over the past decade, which has allowed users to learn and adapt on how to use these platforms — making it convenient over time when other safe alternatives are being introduced.

### Harvesting user data

Social media platforms are pervasive in users' lives — constantly harvesting their data. Users are encouraged to create media accounts where they can provide behavioural, preferential, and demographic data about themselves. This data can be collected from the things you post, like, accept or search about through your devices. (Loyola University, 2016)

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# 2 THE ECOSYSTEM OF INFLUENCES

We looked at the types of users that would be involved in contributing data, then we identified different stakeholders within the social media organizations — leading us to identify the stakeholders operating in the digital domain. Lastly we identified the stakeholders in the physical world where institutions and governing bodies operate.

Referencing the two worlds (front stage & backstage) within the system, we drew the connection between the different actors and identify the type of function/role they play within the system.

We can see that the Users in the middle circle fall under low knowledge and low power as they consent to giving data when signing up on a social platform. The second part of this functional aspect would be the gathering of data through the digital domains, such as mobile, web, or cloud platforms. This data then gets processed by Data scientists or sold by data brokers who tend to buy and sell the user's data.

When it comes to influential interactions, you can see how data advocates in the low power—high knowledge quadrant of the physical world can petition and advocate for data privacy laws to governing bodies like the Congress or Parliament who exist in the high power—high knowledge quadrant.

We can also see that business advocates who are in competition, are in conflict with the organization's leadership. For example, Apple (as indirect competition) has been advocating for data privacy — a goal in direct conflict with Facebook's business model. Both companies could pay for lobbyists for conflicting causes to governing bodies.

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# 3 PEELING BACK THE SYSTEMS AT PLAY

At the core, the social layer, the generation of data from people is supported. It relies on interaction with the platform.

In commerce, trade is promoted and spending habits are influenced with consumer insights.

The newsfeed is a content distribution feature. The media, with insights about user behaviour, can influence and inspire a change in mindset and actions.

For this to be a viable business model for social media corporations, effective outreach is critical. Processes need to ensure the company's relevance to users, and to ensure its social standing through the power and influence of its brand. Only in this way user popularity can have clout.

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## HOW DATA IS HARVESTED

- Sharing user profile details.
- App syncing with personal data, such as settings, photos, contacts, etc.
- Data owned/controlled by organizations.
- "Breach & apologize later" instead of users' consent.

## HOW ADDICTION IS ENCOURAGED

- Social media companies with strong user bases drive more users to join and share more data.
- Exploiting the nature of human psychology — where humans crave social and emotional validation.
- Users like free services and convenience.
- Internet is a place to openly share thoughts vs. censorship and regulations.
- Lack of data literacy.
- Users have no mental capacity to follow up with privacy.

## ARCHETYPE FORMATION

- Profiling/fingerprinting of users.
- Use of user profiling to display targeted advertisements.
- Lack of full ownership of personal user generated content.

## HOW DATA IS ACTUALLY USED

- Social media companies are using user data to sell targeted ads.
- User-generated content used for other purposes without further consent.
- Cross-selling of data to third parties.
- No responsible data practices, impacting the users negatively.
- Lack of transparency on how exactly the data is used.
- Personalization to increase ads and content creation.

## THE VALUE OF A.I.

- New terms and conditions to protect companies' rights to use user-generated content/user data.
- Unawareness of user-generated content being shared publicly.
- Social media giants take advantage of users because they are aware of users' dependency on social media services.

## THIRD-PARTY ACCESS TO DATA

- Misuse of user data to influence political campaigns (e.g. Cambridge Analytica).
- Hearings at the US congress around the use of persuasive technology.
- Cyber-bullying/cyber attacks against targeted users.
- Data hacks and use for political purposes.
- Lack of Monopoly restrictions in the social media market.
- Government mandating laws to work in their favor as well to receive data.

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# THE HAPPY SIDE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Feeling connected to others, up to date on the world, and curating a desired social image. But at the cost of addiction, loss of control, and wasted time.

- Personalized content
- Sense of validation
- Staying up to date
- Human connection
- Taking over traditional forms of media
- Building human Relationships
- Maintain social status
- Feeling connected to others
- Chatting, texting, and calling
- Convenience
- Building a business
- Data is protected
- Entertainment
- Privacy terms and conditions make it feel safe

# THE DARK SIDE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- DATA
- ALGORITHMS
- DIGITAL ARCHETYPE
- Wasted time
- Addiction and Compulsion
- Anti-social behaviors
- Endless scroll
- Fear of missing out

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# 4 THE BUSINESS OF ADDICTION

Addiction, driven by FOMO, boredom, need for connection, or to procrastinate drives users to seek a connection (chatting, wanting news, wanting entertainment, maintain an image, share content), leading to app usage. After continued use, gaining social validation, they're bored, they feel guilty, gain negative feelings, or satisfaction, which takes them off the platform—until addiction kicks in again.

Data collection happens every time a user interacts with the platform. The data is sorted, processed with ai, creating archetypes of people (insights). This process enable platforms to generate relevant content for users. Relevant content keeps users coming back.

At the core of the data economy, data is collected and processed, and sold to advertisers. Advertisers may create their own data archetypes. The data archetype identify users primed for targeted ads, who intake paid content along with personalized or relevant social content. Interaction with these ads are recorded and filed away to generate more insights.

As more data is collected, it opens doors to data abuse, which attracts media attention, leading to public outrage and distrust, leads to a need for governance. Regulation encourages platform privacy policy updates. The ineffectiveness of platform data privacy protections, leads to apathy. People are still going to use the platform, while feeling powerless to do anything about their concerns.

"IF YOU ARE NOT PAYING FOR IT, YOU'RE NOT THE CUSTOMER, YOU'RE THE PRODUCT BEING SOLD" —ANDREW LEWIS

- PURPOSE
- Effective outreach
- Ideological
- Commerce
- Social
- Relevance
- Ideological insights
- Consumer insights
- Data collection
- Interaction
- Retail Trade
- Content distribution
- Popularity
- Platform
- E-commerce platform
- Newsfeed
- Brand
- STRUCTURE

- Seek connection
- Data collection
- Negative press
- Purchased data
- Data abuse
- Data processing (information)
- Digital archetype (insights)
- Distrust
- Regulation
- Addiction
- ADDICTION
- APP USAGE
- CONTENT
- DATA ECONOMY
- GOVERNANCE
- Social validation
- Digital archetype (insights)
- Personalized content
- Personalized ad content
- Platform privacy updates
- Apathy

## Digital archetype

(n) An accurate simulation of a real person, of physical and psychological attributes, built through the collection of personal data.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY
THE MEME TEAM

RHIANNON MILNE  DEBBIE YU  JOY BASHA  AHMED ELKHANGI  ALI SALEM

Avatar photos are copyright of Netflix and the Stranger Things TV show.

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# 5 RESTORING THE BALANCE

Highlighting intervention points within 5 major stakeholder groups: Users, Data & Law Regulators, Privacy Advocates, Social Media Leadership, Third-party businesses.

For example, at intervention point 7, at the root source of the model between the user and social media corp— you have an exchange of data with consent. As an intervention how might we facilitate informed consent?

## USERS

- Encouraging users to be more data literate, provide access/control over their data.
- Advertise or find alternative services that are more privacy-centric.

## DATA & LAW REGULATORS

- Establish a data-literate government.
- Promoting more strict privacy laws on a government level.
- Encourage innovation in new business models to support more privacy-centric practices.
- Reduce monopolization and control over data by leading tech/media giants.

## PRIVACY ADVOCATES

- More advocacy around awareness on data privacy for the users, and lobbying for more strict privacy laws on a government level.

## SOCIAL MEDIA LEADERSHIP

- Using alternative means of ethical advertising that don't require user profiling.
- Provide visibility on which user data is being collected and used.

## THIRD-PARTY BUSINESSES

- Provide visibility on which user data is being used and have transparency on which data is being leveraged for any of their products/campaigns

- Data Literacy
- Data Economics
- Data Transparency
- Data Regulation

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USER BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS

- interests
- employer net worth
- location
- school
- languages field of study
- age parents preferences car info
- gender
- generation
- relationship status
- type of clothing

- CHECKING PRIVACY SETTINGS
- READING TERMS & CONDITIONS
- SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE PER DAY