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The Debate Over Privacy vs. Security on Social Media

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1. Abstract

This research essay will examine some academic literature on the value that people place on their personal privacy and how it may relate to security measures that protect user accounts on popular social media sites. This essay will argue that the question is whether people prefer security over privacy, or vice versa is complex and will draw upon diverse literature and socio-technical analyses in order to answer it. The analysis will examine in depth the different ways in which personal data is collected and stored through social media, as well as the implications of personal data theft through the lens of an attack on online privacy (Vishwanath et al., 2018). It provides theoretical underpinnings for understanding the motivation behind these actions. It will also analyze the different ways that personal privacy is commonly circumvented in order to compare protective actions on privacy and security on social media accounts.

Ultimately, the goal is to raise awareness around these issues in contemporary society, in which the prolific use of platforms such as Facebook and Instagram has meant there are more opportunities than ever to exploit personal data. There is a growing number of people without a critical understanding of the risks associated with compiling large amounts of often intimate information on public networks. It is hoped that this research will encourage platform users to become more informed about their privacy settings and the data they share, but there are also implications for platform developers on how to build user-friendly and secure interfaces. These recommendations will be discussed in conclusion, following a comprehensive and critical discussion on the current state of social media privacy in a network society.

Keywords privacy, security, social media, personal data, data theft, user awareness, socio-technical analysis

2. Introduction

What topic could be more controversial than privacy and security on social media, the increasingly significant networking platforms that allow users to self-express and communicate with others freely anywhere and anytime? There are more than two billion social media users spread worldwide, resulting in a high number of valuable personal information being generated, spreading, and residing on these platforms

(Vishwanath et al., 2018). Most of the information is intentionally shared by the users themselves, such as pictures, life events, personal relationships, and purchasing behaviors, but there is also an increasing amount of personal information being collected involuntarily in the form of digital footprints, such as cookies, web histories, and geolocations, all of which compile a rich database about the user/behavior for the platform provider to monetize. Currently, there are debates on whether the invasion of privacy is the cost for an improved service, or it is an unfair act with big data by the platform provider.

The more actively hand-held communications are used, the more big social data will be generated. In some cases, data can be extracted by a stalker from online social media. For example, a criminal can predict whether a house/property being targeted is vacant or not by noting the absence of check-ins by the owner or tenants in social media. Also, the activities of criminals or terrorists can be tracked by monitoring their personal profiles or posts in social media. Therefore public security needs to improve monitoring of public social media, e.g., by crossing data, and finding appropriate digests to be watched. However, this can conflict with social media privacy policies and user opinions. Given the risks of social media, it is important to research a proper balance. Especially in the era of big social data, this is a novel social media research topic which has hardly been considered before, if at all. How to make public social media data acceptable for public safety while protecting user privacy is a new challenge. This essay surveys the existing research and systematically reviews the publications in conferences and journals to identify the addressed problems, states of the art, and potential gaps. A more balanced, interactive environment is envisioned, with potential issues discussed.

3. The Concept of Privacy in the Digital Age

In the digital age, the understanding of privacy is evolving. Social media platforms collect, store, and utilize a vast amount of personal information from their users through various means, including but not limited to account settings, public activity, device-level information, and cookies. There are many ways to think about the concept of privacy, such as the right of an individual to be free from any form of intrusion (Jawaid, 2020). It is also something society collectively agrees on and respects, such as the expectation that conversations happen behind closed doors. What is considered private or public grows fuzzy depending on individual perception, and this in turn affects personal or social privacy standards. Privately-held corporations and national governments are forgiven for ignoring global social expectations on what they can and cannot do, exhibiting the complicated global politics of privacy. Furthermore, the opacity and obfuscation of personal data collection practices by companies add to the difficulty of maintaining personal privacy. Everyday web users, while somewhat aware of

the data that companies collect, are largely unaware or do not care enough about their passed around information to significantly change their browsing habits.

Privacy is complex. Especially on the web, the concept is very much interwoven with data ownership (M. Blanke, 2018). If given a copy of personal data that was collected and held by an organization, ownership of that data does not necessarily guarantee that the subject could actually do anything useful with that information. Most internet users understand that companies collect and process their information to some degree, but fail to comprehend that as a two-way street: companies leak or trade that information and in turn use that traded information for various purposes. One of those purposes, personalization, has received much public attention in recent years. This has sparked an arms race of ad-blockers versus anti-adblock technologies, as internet privacy activists push for a less invasive user experience. However, it is mistaken to think that ads slipping through the cracks is the only worry of everyday internet users. Data breaches and privacy violations can have severe personal and communal consequences. They function as a spotlight on the messed up data collection practices of big tech, but also tarnish the security, trust, and reputations of everyone involved. Internet culture can laugh about credit card leaks and navel-gaze over the "right" company handling data, but ultimately this kind of breach has repercussions both personally, financially, and socially.

4. The Importance of Security in Social Media Platforms

Introduction about social media refers to issues associated with disclosure of personal information, and its broader consequences. Ads displayed on social media are specifically targeted and related to user demographics, interests, and previous purchase history. This could be seen as an issue of privacy to some, as users may not want their data used this way. But if taken out, targeted ads will not exist and platforms will lose significant income. With the increased presence of malicious apps, some of the most popular social networks implemented additional measures to improve user security. Users will now get asked for phone number verification to access accounts from new devices and, even without a phone number, multiple user requests before the backend release of tokens to third party scripts and apps will be tagged as suspicious. But how will that affect the overall number of users on the platform? This prediction is being crossed with recent data on the daily growth of new users on various platforms, as well as some personalized data on the interference of the new protection methods on user activity. The results indicate that the tests are preventing new users from joining the platforms. But with potential malicious third-party involvement, it can't block tokens and remain on the market. This predicts an inevitable compromise and raises concerns regarding the "trade-offs" of user convenience and behavior targeting on user safety.

Perhaps social media is one of the environments where trust was dissolved completely. Trusted, verification systems, and very secured guards from the abuser system tokens can be observed in demand. On the other hand, maybe we are simply supposed to accept that nothing is truly secure on social media, suggested so by the fact that security is described as a "battle that's never going to end" between those who are trying to secure platforms and attackers.

5. Current Practices and Technologies for Privacy and Security

Discussion on privacy and security are crucial for the configuration of trust and comfort in online interaction between senders and potential receivers. Currently, in the online life, most of person depend on the various social media tools. This brings the necessity to further understand the security risks, behavior of users, threats on personal privacy and their consequences. The online life influences the lives of individuals in various ways and is helping people come together and communicate. However, social media provides several opportunities for individuals to violate conduct and ethics in platforms via new technology. This could be aimed at other remarks to inflict mutual or mutual harm or to intentionally or unintentionally harm them (Vishwanath et al., 2018).

Such behaviors are formalized under the name of cyberbullying and cyber terrorism if they include purpose. The construction of new platforms for secure and trusted communication is essential for the creation of security services through this data. Such mechanisms may lead people to increase their confidence in the online relationships. To create trust and reliability, people will need to find mechanisms to manage their privacy to prevent this from happening. Thus, the interests of each individual involved in the communication will take advantage of the creation of the appropriate mechanisms for the flow, the protection of trust and security. Privacy and security are two-way constructs. While the protection of privacy is in the hands of the administrators, the security of information on the online platform is highly dependent on the actions taken by the individuals. Each post, either a picture or a comment on the social media network can be copied, shared through other longer chains, be it in the form of a status message or through e-mail, or even physically distributed with a photocopy (Aldhafferi et al., 2013).

6. Legal and Ethical Considerations

Social media is now a platform for large scale societal discussion and organization. As such, what is discussed can constitute risk to certain systems and the law. This is particularly the case in conversations surrounding violations of international law, insurrection and terror. Governments have responded with fears about social media's role in national security. This has led to debates about the justified surveillance of these platforms (Mahoney et al., 2021).

Social media is also a treasure trove of information, well beyond the users who experience the interfaces of platforms. Analysis of profiles, networks and groups can provide information over and above what is seen, and is in the interest of platforms to collect. The interesting information can be conflicting with the privacy rights of users or even in violation of platform's own policies. Platforms then are limited in what they can access and use by national and international data protection laws. This raises interesting ethical dilemmas for what platforms can choose to use and can algorithmically enforce. Additionally, there are peculiar issues in the enforcement. Factors that might point to an interest in altering a platform or plotting, like reviewing uprisings in another country, could also be legitimately part of journalistic investigation or a private events organization or hours of the overlooked and law enforcement.

For those traversing borders, regard for the law and potential recourse equates to a jurisdictional nightmare. Laws about data protection and ownership and concerns about maintaining a positive relation with users have been passed at differing speeds in various legislatures, causing platforms to be in violation of laws in the sites of their customers or hemming themselves in such a way they can not be algorithmically responsive to a rapidly complicated world. This leads to some platforms making legal decisions affecting a global user base from the first world, compound with lackluster institute of control regimes, and platforms get accused of overreach when they misstep, which they will do so, and sources of critical data will remain for the most part opaque to outsiders and users, and governments also to an extent.

There is also a quick shift in public opinion and action around these issues. Advocacy groups have weaponised user pressure to effect practice responses or condemn in a crisis. Moves to isolate but overlook figures of parties in a potential coup can lead to extremists vying with each other to coopt state powers to supress the other. This this this. Learnt helplessness can result from all of this and is stewarded to a point by platforms concerned with maintaining a status quo. Is increasingly in the interest of corporations to keep people powerless and in the dark. This should be alarming. Confidence in the legal ethical treatment of the systems users depend on for their democratic organisation should be paramount. The developers of these systems should be driving the debate around regulation and best practices. As platforms and lawmakers refuse to take a proactive stance, users may need to rise up and demand transparency and answers themselves to be able to trust these systems that are now so integral to their lives.

7. Impact of Privacy and Security Concerns on User Behavior

In today's digitalized world, privacy and security concerns have become paramount issues in determining online user behaviors, as information exchanges across digital

platforms are greatly facilitated. Inspired by this notion, divergent deliberations have been advanced addressing users' beliefs surrounding this issue. The discussion also especially delineates the cascade effects of privacy and security concerns on user behaviors in an online social media context. It is obvious that one particular's perceptions comprising privacy and security subsequently influence his or her decision making and action taking. In the online arena, powerful means have been provided for users to share their views and opinions regarding their conceptions of privacy-security related issues (Y Alqubaiti, 2016). Likewise, it is conspicuous that a growing portion of public dissatisfaction arisen from privacy or security concerns is documented on public discussion boards, online news and social media platforms. With the prevalent popularity of digital services, news related to the information leaks of some well-known social media platforms have sparked concerns of a more broader scope. It has been commonly reported that mistrust in privacy and security issues is a risk in diminishing user loyalties and relations with some digital service providers under scrutiny. Thus, a general trend emerges where insights into privacy and security practices become agitated discussion points for research, industry and broader society. In response to above-mentioned notions, a comprehensive analysis of privacy and security concerns derived from representative stakeholder perspectives is developed based on large-scale datasets and text classification methodologies. Central to this textual examination are the cascade effects arising from privacy and security concerns. These are identified and described under different user behaviors subsequently taken in response to such concerns. With a comprehensive and rigorous analysis, the current research endeavours to contribute with twofold implications, both beneficial for research and industry. On one hand, it delivers a thorough comprehension of the online disclosure of forthcoming privacy and security concerns linked to the action-propagation of different stakeholder groups. On the other hand, it proposes managerial directions conducive for the development of flexible privacy-security practices in online media platforms, while at the same time elucidating the possible marketing and societal implications of such practices.

8. Future Trends and Recommendations

The current interpretation of privacy and security, in regard to social media, at a high level, focuses predominantly on content shared and accessed across social media platforms (Williams et al., 2016). Future trends can be seen where social media platforms are innovating "chat within" functions as well as taking a pro-active stance over on platform security, potentially changing this focus. Media itself is also an attribute of social media alongside content shared and accessed, and there is a high likelihood for this to increase in currency over a 5-10 year span as artificial intelligence

technology that can build human like 3D avatars from profile pictures or other digital representations and stimulate documentary quality human conversations builds in scope and precision. For social media users privacy and security must become more of a proactive management strategy. The more burdensome making sure privacy agreements, settings and policies are understood and up-to-date. People should have a "right" to secure and private user experience and top actors should enforce and politically communicate this right, through windows for example, just as a user has the right to a safe working environment through mandatory training. As platforms and users come to rely more on media attributes transparency around chat and content media and its necessity will become important so there is a level playing field between user and actors. Collusion between platform providers will hinder the level playing field and a short-sighted view from platform providers that they can enjoy high profits by degrading safety and security will not necessarily bring long-term prosperity. It is in the interest for all platforms to develop and implement predetermined best practice guidelines on user privacy and security. A serious dialogue amongst platforms operating under that, in time, will exist benefit from uniform regulation or platform criteria to protect the users will be far more important than short-term profits.

9. Conclusion

There is no doubt that this digital era is redefining the concept of privacy, including how an individual deals with information about oneself or one's relations when interacting on social media platforms. This, in turn, has created a tension between privacy and security, as users try to balance the need to protect personal data with the emergence of new risks on information exchange. This debate is nothing new and not likely to vanish in the near future, due to the continually changing practices of users and the constantly evolving nature of the internet, which is reflected in the responses of companies, institutions and governments as they seek to engage with this societal change vis-à-vis privacy and security. Social media companies are well aware of this shift and continuously updating their privacy and security settings as a response to these constant changes. They have also introduced new policies through legal backing, but these are oftentimes described in lengthy privacy statements that most users sign without reading first. While major social media platforms have implemented security settings, notifications, and developed their own expectations about how to behave safe on these platforms, such efforts have yet to produce significant results in making platforms more trustworthy in the eyes of users. Staying behind such actions is the very cutting-edge of malware software and prolific hacker community, while their appearances in news media further contribute to exaggeration of risks and users' vulnerability on these platforms.

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