Privacy & Commerce

Consent (n): permission for something to happen or agreement to do something.

Meeting signup: **Friday at 11:59**
Very last RJ: **Sunday**
Bookkeeping

- Next class: last discussion day!

- Upcoming:
  - Meet with instructor: http://tiny.cc/304FinalProjectSignup
  - By Friday at midnight!
  
  - Fill out worksheet: http://tiny.cc/FinalProjectWorksheet
  - Nov. 30th at midnight
  
- Everything else: http://tiny.cc/FinalProjectInstructions

- Questions?
It’s Fine / Who Cares

“‘If we wanted to figure out if a customer is pregnant, even if she didn’t want us to know, can you do that?’

‘What Target was doing … **was not invasive** … they just drew a conclusion from the data they were given.’”

‘Target is **completely within their … rights** to crunch data about their products’ sales’

‘Most people **understand** that their online habits and search engine history are being recorded…’

‘In my opinion it shouldn't matter, **as long as you have nothing to hide.**’*

*I have nothing to hide (that I think is actually bad, that could be found out), **and** (I think) nobody would ever target me for harassment.*
“Even if she didn’t want us to know”
◆ “It’s unethical to gather information on people without their prior approval.”
◆ “I don't think most people know that the things they buy at Target is [sic] being recorded”
◆ “What if advertisements reveal things that you don't want others to know?”
◆ “People should be informed that they're being tracked.”
◆ “There is a clear loss of … ‘controlled data’.”
◆ “… the uses for all of these public data collections are … promote and influence certain consumer habits”
◆ “I’m all about freedom of choices when it comes to this.”
“If we wanted to figure out if a customer is pregnant, even if she didn’t want us to know, can you do that?”

“I would most likely try to make an educated decision to shop at the place with the best deals”

Quick hand-raise poll: who actually thinks they are unaffected by multi-billion dollar marketing research efforts?

“Are traditional retail business practices really less effective than this?”

(Yes)

“If I want the pickle ads to stop, all I have to do is unlike the pickle page”

“… very few people actually do anything to prevent it”
… companies are not using their data to be creepy … [but to] provide a great customer experience?

Don't they [customers] benefit from the discounts on items they'd likely purchase anyway?
Consent and Consequences

- Why might invading your privacy be wrong?
  - (Or violating other rights)

- Consequences:
  - Does it change things…
  - If it does you harm? Does you no harm? Does you good?

- Consent:
  - And / or, does it matter…
  - What you want?
  - Whether you are informed?
  - Whether you have a choice?
About Consent

- But they voluntarily:
  - “Shopped there / put that info on facebook / posted to a forum / used a credit card instead of cash / wore that skirt”

- No.

- Just because a victim could have done something that would have changed the outcome:
  - Does not mean others aren’t responsible for not harming.
  - Does not mean that person was ethically obliged to do it.
    - Does making a change interfere with their rights in other ways?
    - Is the change to avoid someone interfering with their rights unjustly?
  - Watch for victim blaming.
“If you’re not paying…”

“If you're not paying for the product, you are the product.”

- **Pragmatically:**
  - The assumption: Companies you pay treat you better.
    - Counterexamples: Tumblr; banks; every phone company ever; …
  - What's inherently wrong is a company…
    - Screwing their users. … selling data without your consent…
  - those things … have nothing to do with whether you’re paying
    - They have to do with the company’s leadership, their level of complacency, and their demonstrated respect for their customers.

- **Ethically:**
  - The assumption: not paying means not complaining.
  - Does partaking of a free service, offered freely, mean you have no rights?

Quoted largely from: [http://powazek.com/posts/3229](http://powazek.com/posts/3229)
Discussion Questions

- How much does consent matter? Consequences?
- What might someone not want known?
  - Why? Could they find out? How bad would that be?
- Discuss consent, consequences, and ethics for red lines.

- How much you drink  • Parents
  Marijuana use  • Friends
- Whereabouts and actions  • Teachers
- Sexual orientation  • Classmates
- Religious preference  • Employers
- (Choose your own)  •