

Case Analysis on Privacy

In Siva Vaidhyanathan's *Googleization of Everything*, Siva explains how Google rolled out their street view service for Google maps. How citizens across the world reacted to how Google started the service and how it might affect their privacy. He received mixed reviews from American users, some were worried that it was essentially an invasion of privacy, and some embraced it to use it to better their lives. It also had very different reactions from other countries that they tried to implement it in. For instance, when Google went to Japan, the population had strong feelings of their privacy being evaded because their sense of home is a different from that of the United States. So, driving through their neighborhoods and street is almost like walking into their houses. The Japanese were less than thrilled about this new turn of events. So, of the British population were also upset about this new form of technology, and some didn't mad it as they are already being watched through CCTV in the United Kingdom. In this Case Analysis I will argue that utilitarianism shows us that Google should have made everyone aware of the situation.

One of Floridi's concepts is that of informational privacy in the aspect of people not wanting their information out for the masses. That the less people know about you the more private your life is. That even showing what their houses look like and can readily just see how many cars you might have or the setup of your property is an invasion of their privacy. That the very nature of being able to see their house on an app without their permission was a violation for them. That if a criminal wanted to scoop out a potential mark all they would need to do is pull up Google maps with street view and scroll up and down the street with really no effort on their part. The residents don't believe that simply blocking out their license plates and blurring some landmarks are enough to deter criminals. Which directly goes with another concept of Floridi, and that is mental privacy and given residents the peace of mind that no one can interfere with their life. Given the residents the knowledge that they don't have to restrict what they do because their information is front and center for all to see. The concept utilitarianism

was the stance on which Google acted, they believed that even though there might be some people that was make a fess the overall happiness from the application was worth some people not being happy. Google know they would have some push back which is why they had the statements that faces, license plates and other identifiable marks removed to an extent. But they also knew that for every one person that might have a problem with it, someone would be thrilled with the ideal and would ultimately use it for good. Even though the tool is extremely helpful when using directions to found places so you know what to look for and not just listening for turns.

I think that Google should have had informational conferences, or even done a Ted Talk to get the people's reaction before they launched the product. Then let them decide if it would be an invasion of their privacy before it is rolled out. They could see it in action before the cars started canvassing the neighborhoods. They could have done a demo using their own neighborhoods to show people how everything would work and options for opting out of the service. Also, explaining the process of opting out and what steps to follow to make it happen. Give the population a choice as to whether they want to participate in the service. Instead of just going out and taking pictures of people houses and cars and sometimes their bodies if they are out in the streets at that time. But as usual big business thinks they know what best for everyone, and they only see that majority of the population would see anything wrong with it so they went ahead with their plans. But they could have taken everyone's concern into account and asking simple questions before hand could have saved them so much headache and push back. Just acknowledging that some people have a harder time with new technology and took the time to assure them that nothing negative was happening. They might have not even batted an eye at the cars surveying their neighborhoods, it would have giving them the time they needed to adjust to the concept. Accept that it could be a great tool to use and maybe it could be something they would use often. Instead of just saying some people won't like it but their attitudes about it are small compared to joy it would bring to millions.

A central concept of Grimmelmann is one of ownership-based interpretations, that because you own something you have a right to privacy for that thing. For instance, your Facebook page is your own and that without going in and making your profile completely private you should have that privacy no matter what. That you have that ownership-based right to privacy and the whole should not intrude upon it, no matter if it is on a social media site. Like with street view, home owners wanted to press upon Google that their way of life, homes, cars, yards, and just everyday life was private. That since they cannot control how street view is used, they have no say over their privacy. If they opt out and their neighbors don't their privacy is still a concern because their property can still be accessed without their knowledge. It is their property and they want to protect their way of life and not have to worry about their information offered up for an application. Your address is something that should be private, you can't just go into the DMV and get someone's information because of privacy concerns. Street view should be the same, even federal census' are not released for 70 years to make sure that the people of family that is there won't have problems with someone using that platform to invade their privacy. Google's utilitarianism view is in the fact that just take pictures of someone's property is not considered a privacy concern because it's just objects and if they have any issues with it, they can opt. But if they don't opt out the end result will be more beneficial for the population as a whole and some push back is acceptable because more people will be happy with the product.

I would have to say that Google should have done so many things when it comes to the launch of street view. The fact that they weren't concerned with the concerns of some because the product would reach and help more is a concern. Everyone's opinion should matter, should some make the decisions for all no. But their concerns should be taken seriously, and then given the answers they need to make an informed decision about the product. I can understand the point about ownership-based privacy, I don't want me to know what kind of car I have at my house in my drive way. Just because you block out my plate, they still have my address. I know it's the same information that can get just by driving pass my house but they have to

work for it with that solution. With street view all my informational privacy is within their fingertips, no effort involved.

Having a utilitarianism view can help or hurt situations and making decisions for everyone doesn't always work. Some people will feel how they feel about a situation and they are entitled to those opinions. Different cultures have different expectations on their privacy, even if Google didn't explain it further in the United States or even the United Kingdom, countries where this type of thing isn't the normal should have been warned or having been given some time to adjust and see that in reality your privacy is safe about the same as people just driving through your neighborhood. But they weren't and Google just waited for it all to blow over. Again, not the ethical route I would have taken to launch my service whether I thought it could be great help to people or not.

My position is that Google could have made a better effort to make sure everyone was included in the decisions to launch a service like street view. Calm those concerned with their privacy concerns, and demonstrate any features that made people hesitant. The goal of their service is making something as simple as getting directions simple, not alienating a subset of people and their beliefs. We all know how useful the product is now, but they could have easily did so in the beginning. Yes, I know that sometimes that is easier said than done to take account of how everyone will react to something new. But you also have to try to make people feel like when they have a concern it will be heard and not just brushed off with a generic statement. You have to make them feel as if their concerns were your concerns and they will be addressed. And privacy in a time where everything seems to be out in the open and you have no control over it, those people needed to know they could still have that one thing.