

Privacy is a difficult concept to understand and navigate, particularly when companies and individuals mix their personal lives with technology. Information that would not be as easily accessible is readily available with a few clicks, raising concerns for many who take steps to withhold their information from search engines like Google. For example, Google Street View is a popular method for users to view neighborhoods and busy areas without physically being there, allowing for a safe method in preparation for visiting. However, this is done without the consent of homeowners. Any area (except from government facilities) is photographed with 360-degree cameras at a designated time, with or without people in view. Blurring and erasing technology that cannot be undone is used to cover faces, license plates, and other sensitive information, attempting to protect individuals. The ethical implications of the usage of surveillance are up for debate. Although they disguise personal information from the public, it is not difficult to retrieve it from other websites using the imagery provided by the application. In this Case Analysis, I will argue that connecting Kant's theory on Deontology shows us that Google and similar applications that collect sensitive information should feel a moral obligation and respect to their users by giving informed user agreements, consent, and autonomy to their privacy.

Floridi's definition of privacy is based on software, networks, and platforms known as Information and Communication Technology (ICT). A concept emphasized by the author, "informational friction", states that ICT decreases or increases the rate at which privacy is used. Unlike other definitions of privacy, this concept challenges the perspective at which individuals will manage their information. In what ways should individuals and society proceed to protect their privacy? Will better results show by being active in protecting information or passive by letting things flow? Another philosophy given by Floridi is the state of online anonymity. It is used to prevent a breach of privacy by going by another name, or none at all; giving a sense of control over one's information by how, what, and where they choose to share about themselves online.

In my opinion, Floridi's perspective on privacy, especially anonymity, is on the right track. He provided reasonable key points on the current way privacy is viewed by the general public, as something that is self-constituting to the individual, eliminating outside sources from infringing on said privacy. However, there are ways that external sources have control over the privacy of another through documents or personal records given to a company or facility. This would constitute the phrase "semi-public" as information that a person may not want to be public is put on a database with or without their consent. Although, internal privacy is the most valuable form as it is up to the individual, specifically information not put on databases such as knowledge, perspectives, or preferences. Groups of people should "pitch in" to protect each other's privacy as

invasions of privacy can easily worsen. Anonymity and the lack of an identity online is a safe way to navigate virtual spaces. As Floridi stated, in a space with two people who choose to hide their identity vs. one who shares surface-level information, one will have more or less privacy and will be subjected to different experiences. It is ultimately up to the individual to choose how they want to be perceived online. Anonymity in real life is much harder without a face covering or a major change in physical appearance.

Kantian Deontology relating to Floridi's values on privacy insists that humans have the inherent human right and ability to control their information however they choose. His values focus on respect for every individual's autonomy. An example of this is the choice of anonymity or public presence being up to the user and their beliefs, he argues that respect for that person's decision no matter the outcome is important as it gives them dignity. Floridi's emphasis on the shared protection of information within communities aligns with Kant's morality of providing goodwill to others. The call to action presented by Floridi for protecting privacy also shows the connection between his standards and the Kantian Deontology ideology of duty and ethical principles, notably the strong sense of responsibility to do right by themselves and help to reflect the same moral principles onto the people around them.

In Grimmelmann's article, he describes privacy as a misconception of the general public based on assumptions. He points out the issues of the foundation of social media platforms and the myth that individuals believe that "users do not care about privacy". Users post intimate parts of their lives and information isn't shared in real-life instances because it provides a sense of autonomy and control over how they want to be perceived, not because they do not care. Furthermore, users are unhappy with their information being shared reflected by the Facebook News Feed feature and data retention that ended on April 2024. Grimmelmann cited an event of two young women who met a musician, eventually being posted on a tabloid without their knowledge or consent; a risk of sharing information online. "Regulation itself does not solve the issue". As a solution, the author suggested that companies create "safer products" and that lawmakers create thorough online privacy laws that promote transparency and accountability. As technology advances, new approaches to security must be used to make positive progress.

In my opinion, Grimmelmann's perspective on privacy is nuanced and creates a larger dialogue on the current lack of proper guidelines and confusion surrounding online spaces. The issue also lies within the collection of data Facebook conducts in making these "shadow profiles" which is a huge breach of privacy that the person cannot even log in to correct or delete. His viewpoint on the negative results of online privacy regulation is interesting because it can benefit users, notably the privacy and protection

of underage users via the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). However, COPPA is practically useless in modern times with social media and is usually only helpful with online forums that target both an older and younger demographic. Additionally, underage users can easily lie about their age online so the regulation is inherently flawed, as Grimmelmann stated. This is why I agree that lawmakers need to be more involved in the online sphere of protection of users and their data, with proper laws set in place the COPPA law could become effective again, protecting children from media they are not able to process and decisions they are unable to make for themselves without the help from a parent or trusted guardian.

Kantian Deontology, related to Grimmelmann's values on privacy, prioritizes fairness and the inherent duty to protect oneself and one's peers. Notably, accountability for individuals and businesses is emphasized, stating that harmful content shown by algorithms hurts users as well as the lack of transparency demonstrated by social media platforms like Facebook that mines personal data to create "shadow profiles" without user consent, essentially using information about individuals from other platforms against them, manipulating and removing their autonomy. Accountability for individuals is vital for fairness and protections that young users need when navigating online if they are lying about their age it opens up the potential for negative encounters such as a lack of security and invalid disclosure agreements. Companies must display the moral obligation and duty of caring for their consumers' rights to a safe space.

In conclusion, the moral obligation companies must have when protecting online privacy is necessary for a better social media landscape, ultimately, striving to protect their consumers' information because it is the right thing to do, not because they desire to increase profits by cutting corners and ignoring individual rights. Strict laws and regulations help to protect consumers up to a certain point. Expecting companies to change their strategies will require a greater outcry as their motives revolve around money. Targeted marketing and trends are the biggest factors in mining user data. Users will continue using social media services because of how normal it has become for the population, even if a user decides to leave or not join a platform their data will most likely show up anyway as proven by Grimmelmann's findings on Facebook's "shadow profiles". Floridi and Grimmelmann's Kantian Deontology-driven arguments for privacy each supply a unique perspective of how valuable morality is when platforms have shown their neglect and the impact on individuals and communities.