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Subject: Freedom of Expression and Privacy in the Digital World

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1. Freedom of Expression

Most of my free time is spent on YouTube and Reddit. For YouTube, I can personalize my feed to display things I enjoy, such topics include "Coding Tutorials" and "Video Editing Tutorials". I particularly like how YouTube displays anything that can be inappropriate or more importantly false information. To have such markings really helps me to decide if a video is appropriate for me and dependable. Furthermore, many artists will add references in the description, therefore, should I choose to go further, I may.

A big reason YouTube feels comfortable is its content rules. Officially, YouTube claims that it forbids any violent or hateful videos. To add to that, it has a mechanism in place where users can report offensive materials. Videos endorsing severe violence or harassment don't even get the chance to see the light of day. Based on my experience as a part time videographer; YouTube uses a program where it analyses each frame of the video for abusive content plus its audio deeply. This is to not even allow a video to be made public if it does not adhere to YouTube's strict policies. It also relieves me that YouTube at least attempts to safeguard people as I have also seen accounts terminated for consistent infractions.

Apart from YouTube, I share my opinions and gain fresh knowledge on Reddit. Reddit has a large community base where members cover anything from casual memes to thorough academic studies to even how to properly cook a steak. If I want fast comments or other points of view on a subject, it's quite convenient. Though every subreddit has its own method of regulation, moderators often intervene when there is hate speech or toxic conduct. Lastly, Twitter lets me watch trends in real time, meanwhile, but I have also seen some nasty messages go under notice. Still, I go to this place when anything significant is occurring in the globe because word travels there so swiftly.

2. Privacy

Bank of America has the most important information out of all the places that I have provided my personal data. They hold my social security number, address, and all my financial records. According to Bank of America's privacy policy, they mostly disclose personal data under federal laws like the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act for things like transaction processing and legal obligations. They also allow me to opt out of certain marketing, which is great as I want no pointless advertisements if I can prevent them.

Even with these protections, I find myself worried sometimes. Being in this cybersecurity major, throughout all my classes I get to find out about a new data breach that happened every week that I was unaware of. An example is the Equifax incident a few years ago. Even if Bank of America has great security, if one of its credit bureaus or partners mistakes, my information might still be revealed. Although the bank's privacy statement tells me it employs encryption and follows rigorous procedures, no system is flawless. To find any odd behavior, I still routinely review my credit report and statements. Being extremely cautious seems to be the best approach for me to guard myself.

3. Major Concerns About My Online Presence

Some of the issues for me include government monitoring, massive data breaches, and the use of personal data to display targeted ads. A data breach can happen at any company, thus making my personal information public. Sometimes it feels invasive when personalized ads for things I just discussed start showing up. I do understand that it has to play with allowing cookies on websites, but nowadays most won't allow you to access that particular website without allowing the use of them.

Also, the idea of the government spying on us triggers me as well. There have been times where I have held back about discussing certain political problems, anonymously. This is because I would not like to be placed in a file where all my views stand. Throughout multiple reddit posts I have seen that users also can concerns about this. This, may also compromise online free speech. Julia Angwin's book *Dragnet Nation* points out how easily businesses and governments might get personal data and analyze it. Once the data is available, guiding where or how it flows becomes somewhat difficult.

All things considered, the relationship between freedom and protection of speech is difficult. I know I can share my thoughts, learn from others, and stay up to date on news,

but they do collect data and might not always get rid of harmful content quickly. That being said, other businesses may not be as safe as my bank, so I trust that they will keep my money safe. It would be great if content laws were consistently enforced. Even better if there was a way to see who is getting my personal information. In the digital world we live in now, this is the balance we need to have open conversations and feel safe about our privacy.

Citations:

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