The Uses of Exploitation: Digital Enclosure and the Personal Information Economy

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- "alienation is the point of departure for everything-- providing one departs from it."
  - "Domenach vs. Alienation" (*Situationist International*), 1965

Three initial approaches

- Digital enclosure and The "Big Data" digital divide

- Facebook and Work

- Annals in Innovation: Social Networking in the Workplace

Data is the new Oil

Google is as much about infrastructure as it is about the search engine…They are building an enormous computing resource on a scale that is almost unimaginable"

The "cloud"

The Continuous Character of Enclosure

- A process of separation that reproduces separation.

- In order to access our data, we are separated from it (and subjected to terms for accessing it).

- Privatization of the network facilitates (separation from communicative resources) reproduces separation from data.

Who owns your files on Google Drive?

Google Drive's terms of service do indeed allow you to own your own files, but grant the company a license to do as it wants with your uploaded content.

"Your Content in our Services: When you upload or otherwise submit content to our Services, you give Google (and those we work with) a worldwide licence to use, host, store, reproduce, modify, create derivative works (such as those resulting from translations, adaptations or other changes that we make so that your content works better with our Services), communicate, publish, publicly perform, publicly display and distribute such content.

The rights that you grant in this licence are for the limited purpose of operating, promoting and improving our Services, and to develop new ones. This licence continues even if you stop using our Services (for example, for a business listing that you have added to Google Maps)."

"The New Oil": Surveillance and "big data"

- 90 percent of the world's [stored] data has been generated in the past two years.

- IBM says people create the equivalent of 2.5 quintillion bytes of data from sensors, mobile devices, online transactions and social networks every day.

Productivity of Big Data?

- Data mining
- Predictive analytics
- "Reality mining": "Phones can know… People can get this god's-eye view of human behavior."
  - Alex Pentland

I.B.M. Unveils Real-Time Software to Find Trends in Vast Data Sets
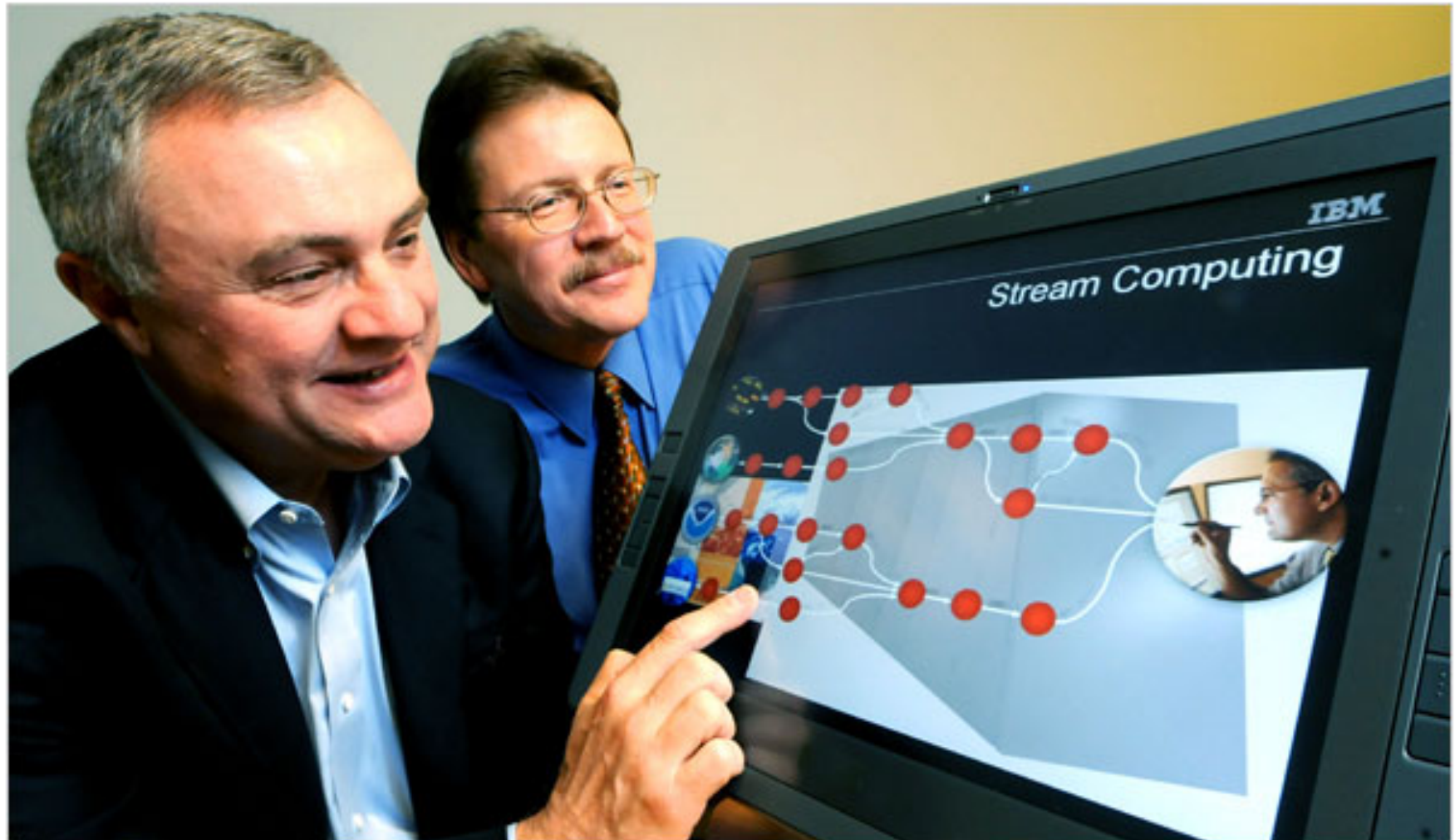
Commercial Uses of Big Data

- Predictive analytics and data mining
  - Social Sorting (deterrence, inclusion, exclusion)
  - Influence
  - Modulation of the Information Environment

- It's not just about "privacy" or targeted advertising.

Sorting Issues

- Employment
- Education
- Health Care
- Credit/Finance

Employment

- "Another example of using data mining in retail operations is for employee screening. Predictive models can be applied to candidates during the job screening process to help segment them and determine whether they are good candidates, and if so, where they would be best placed within the organization."

  – *Predictive analytics for the retail industry*, Microsoft, 2009

Education

- Colleges are turning to these methods to help students select majors, and in the future, colleges could use them to help students find the right college.
  - Admissions Lab, 2012
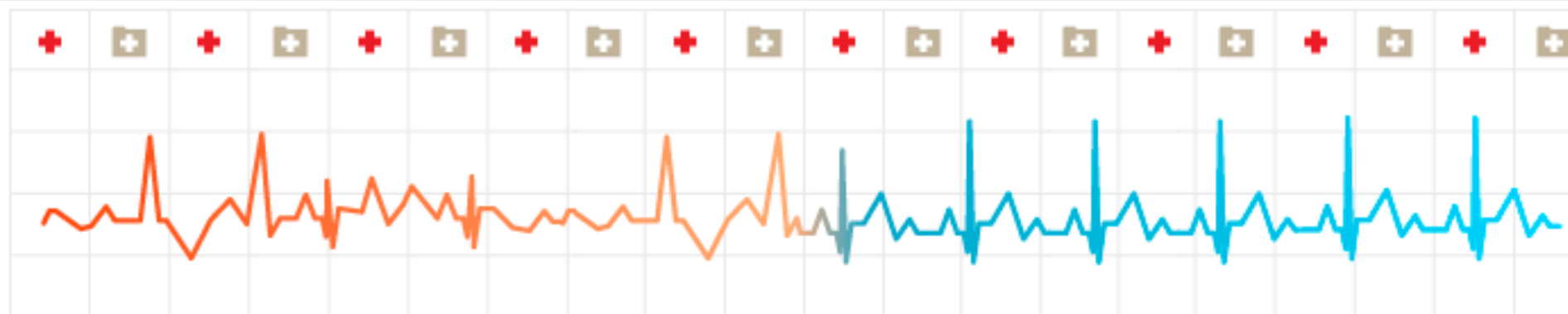
Improve Healthcare,
Win $3,000,000.

COMPETITION GOAL

Identify patients who will be admitted to a hospital within the next year, using historical claims data.

Credit

- "And in fact **credit**-card companies keep an eye on whether you are making purchases of that kind, because **divorce** is expensive and they are paranoid that you might stop paying your **credit**-card bill. For example, if you use your card to pay for a marriage counselor, they might decrease your **credit** line." NYTimes, 2/12/12

Influence Issues

- Not simply providing "relevant" ads.
- Ongoing process of experimentation.
- Combination of demographic, biometric, medical, social, behavioral, genetic, contextual (etc.) for the purposes of influence.

Now Credit Card Companies Want Your DNA

By **MARTHA C. WHITE** | October 27, 2011 | **8**

A *Wall Street Journal* article earlier this week reported that Visa and MasterCard are exploring new ways to take data about your buying habits in the brick-and-mortar world and let online marketers use that information to target you with ads when you browse the web. But buried a little ways down in the article are some details that are considerably more alarming. Visa, the article says, wants access to everything from your insurance claim history to your Facebook friends list to your DNA. Yes, you read that right:

STEVEN PUETZER / GETTY IMAGES

> According to a Visa patent application published in April, the company sees potential to use a wide array of personal details to create profiles that could be used for ad targeting well beyond shopping details. It describes the possibility of also using "information from social network websites, information from credit bureaus, information from search engines, information about insurance claims, information from DNA databanks," and other sources.

A societal, collective issue

- "The bargain that we are making is a collective one, and the costs will be felt at a societal scale. When we think in terms of power, it is clear we are getting a raw deal: we grant private entities -- with no interest in the public good and no public accountability -- greater powers of persuasion [deterrence, modulation] than anyone has ever had before and in exchange we get free email"
  – Alexander Furnas, The Atlantic

Modulation Issues

- The malleability of the digital environment
- "Filter Bubble"
- Historical concerns of the political economy of media.
  - How does the commercial character of the medium shape our informational lives?
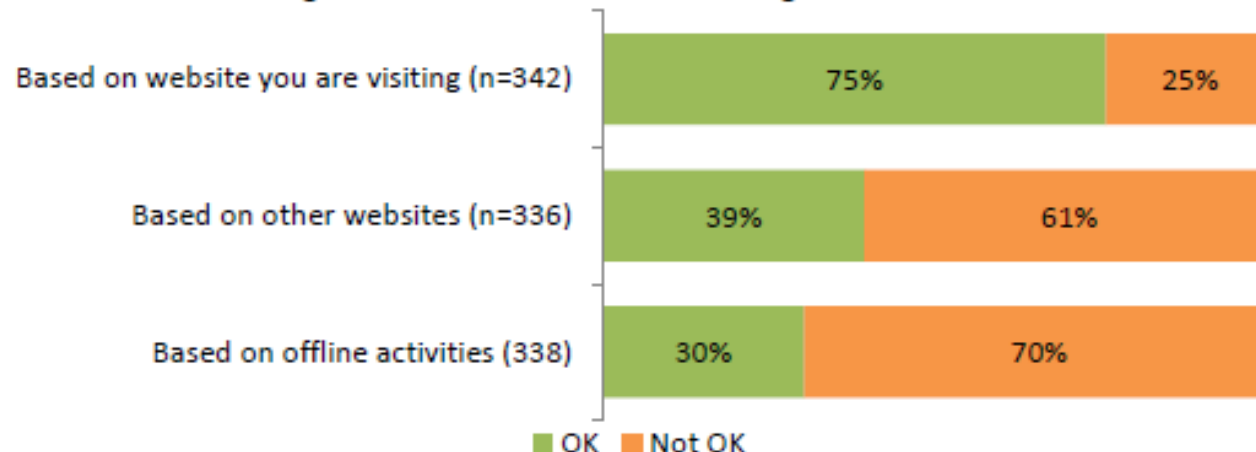
5.1 Attitudes Towards Tailored Advertising

Just over one third of Australian internet users (36%) think that it is OK for websites to show ads based on information they have collected in the background about their interests. Over half do not think this is OK (56%), leaving 7% who are not sure.

Significantly higher proportions of younger people feel that this is OK (53% 18-24 year olds and 45% 25-39 year olds), further illustrating the attitudinal differences between those over and under 40 years of age.

A question was asked of those who indicated that they felt this activity was OK, to further clarify the parameters. It is apparent that the majority feel it is OK if the tailoring is based on information collected on the same website (75%), but far fewer are accepting of this activity if it draws information from other sources, such as other websites (39%) or offline activities (30%).

Figure 5.1 Attitudes towards Tailoring of Ads Online

	OK	Not OK
Based on website you are visiting (n=342)	75%	25%
Based on other websites (n=336)	39%	61%
Based on offline activities (338)	30%	70%

■ OK ■ Not OK

Base: Those who ever use the internet (n=965)| *weighted*
Q12   Is it OK with you when the Web sites you visit show you ads that are based on information they have collected in the background about your interests?
Base: Those for whom tailored ads are OK (n=315)| *weighted*
Q13   Would it be OK or not OK if...

Credit card companies try to link purchases, online ads

By Marisa Taylor

Credit card companies Visa and MasterCard are exploring plans to use information about customers' credit card purchases to target them with online advertising, a move that would break new ground in connecting shoppers' offline and online behavior, according to a report from The Wall Street Journal.

Both companies drew up proposals earlier this year detailing plans to incorporate users' personal details from places like DNA databanks into profiles that could then be used to target them with advertisements online, according to the WSJ story, or to "link Internet users to information about actual purchase behaviors for ad targeting."
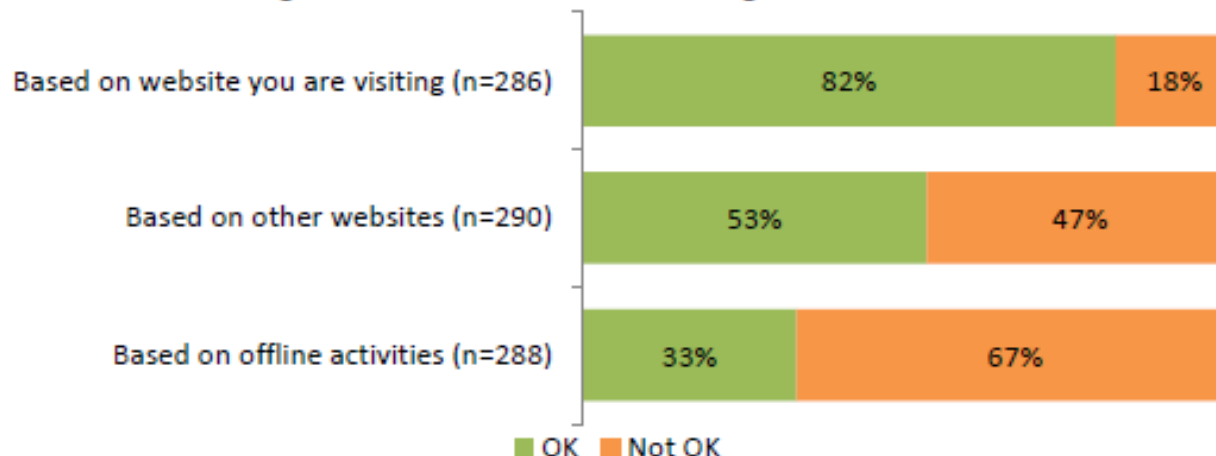
5.2 Attitudes Towards Tailored News

Almost a third of Australian internet users (31%) are comfortable with websites tailoring news presented on the site based on information about interests collected in the background. Two thirds (64%) are against this practice.

As with tailored advertising, higher proportions of those in younger age groups welcome this activity relating to news (46% 18-24 year olds).

Of those who indicated that they feel this activity is OK, most (82%) are OK with it provided the information is gathered solely from the website they are visiting. The collection of this information from other websites is more widely accepted for news activities (53%) than advertising (39%, see figure 5.1). The integration of information collected offline is, as is also the case with advertising content, not very widely considered to be OK (only 33%).

Figure 5.1 Attitudes towards Tailoring of News Online

	OK	Not OK
Based on website you are visiting (n=286)	82%	18%
Based on other websites (n=290)	53%	47%
Based on offline activities (n=288)	33%	67%

■ OK ■ Not OK

A "Big Data" divide

- Who has access to/controls the database?
  - Storage
  - Manipulation
  - Modulation
- Different logics of monitoring and data collection.
- A different way of thinking about/using information.

Aspects of "big data" monitoring

- "Populational" rather than targeted
- Predictive and correlational rather than referential.
- Omnivorous
- Experimental
- Can be "anonymous" or "de-identified"

- Out with every theory of human behavior, from linguistics to sociology. Forget taxonomy, ontology, and psychology. Who knows why people do what they do? The point is they do it, and we can track and measure it with unprecedented fidelity. With enough data, the numbers speak for themselves.

  – Chris Anderson, *Wired*, June, 2008

Psychotic reflexivity

- The impulse here is what Zizek (1996) describes as a psychotic response to the demise of symbolic efficiency: 'psychosis involves the external distance the subject maintains towards the symbolic order…*and* the collapsing of the Symbolic into the Real (a psychotic treats "words as things"; in his universe, words fall into things and/or things themselves start to speak)' (196).

Second Approach
EMPLOYMENT ANXIETIES

Employers and Facebook

Home / News & Blogs / iGeneration

Should you give up your Facebook password for a dream job?

By Zack Whittaker | February 23, 2011, 4:45am PST

Summary: *A Maryland government employee refused to hand over his Facebook login password during an interview to get his old job back. Would you give prospective employers the keys to your Facebook?*

Imagine this. You've left university with a good degree, and after months of searching you have found what could be the perfect job.

The one caveat is that you are required to hand over the keys to your Facebook profile and other social networks to proceed.

You are in: Homepage > Digitaledge > Social networking

Scrub your Facebook profile with Socioclean

21/02/2011

Tweet 0   +1 0   Pin it   0 comments

Been for a new job recently? Didn't get it? Bad luck. What with the economy and all, competition in many areas has never been so fierce. But what if something you didn't think of doomed your application? Sure, you interviewed well, and your CV was scrubbed of typos. But did you think to check your Facebook profile?

Swiss Woman Caught Surfing Facebook While 'Home Sick' From Work

Third Approach
FACEBOOK GOES TO WORK

Facebook For The Enterprise

Use the power of your company's social network to more effectively promote your brand, generate new business and find new employees.

Facebook is the internet's leading social utility. Connecting Facebook's 110 million users with an enterprise's core business applications can help both organizations and individuals capture the power of social networking to contribute to the business' bottom line.

Appirio's first Facebook product, MyFriends@Work, connects the sophisticated CRM capabilities of salesforce.com with the viral social networking capabilities of the Facebook Platform, giving users a powerful business tool to deepen customer relationships and assist with sales and marketing efforts.

But we think we're at the early stages of bringing Facebook into the enterprise. Here's what we see on the horizon:

- A Salesforce application that gives companies visibility and control to take full advantage of how their employees use Facebook

- Allow users to conduct casual business with work contacts over Facebook (e.g., send thank you notes, ask questions, make recommendations, transfer referrals, generate leads, promote events)

- Use your social network to find and attract great talent for your company (e.g., match friends to open jobs at your company, make a job referral)

Appirio Press Release

- "This extension helps increase the size of a company's "virtual account team" by leveraging relationships that employees might already have…The employee can see if a friend has become a lead, bought a product, attended an event…etc. If the employee chooses they can contact their friend through Facebook to make a connection and ultimately help contribute to their company's bottom line (and maybe even their own bonus!)"

- *Viral marketing:* Based on a search of keywords in friend profiles, the application makes recommendations of friends who might be interested in the offer, which users can then choose to take action on. Because of the integration with Salesforce CRM, customers can use the native functionality to track leads, make follow-up offers, and report on campaign success to see how their viral campaigns stack up to other marketing programs.

Exploiting social networking

- Appirio: power relations structure "freely" agreed upon conditions of exchange (is this generalizable?)
  - social networking sites serve, as one employer put it, as, "a fundamental communication tool to probably more than half our workforce"

Social networking the workforce

- Just as **Facebook** members post their latest vacation photos and spark conversations with buddies, someone in a marketing department, say, can post the latest version of a new ad and get instant feedback from his entire team on Chatter. A potential customer deal, new store opening or marketing campaign can have its own page. Interested parties can post their thoughts and receive automatic notifications of other people's posts to the page--without having to claw through a lengthy chain of e-mails. "Why do I know more about my friends on **Facebook** than I do about my own employees?" Benioff quips.

Chatter

- the "Chatterati"--are called out, even invited to what was once an exclusive annual gathering of the 250 top managers, where they share their views of the company. Benioff singles out the weak participants, too. Roughly 20,000 companies are using the application, too..

- Similar social tools, of course, are all the rage. Oracle's upcoming launch of Fusion, which knits together many of its app acquisitions, incorporates social networking features. People can post status updates and join groups. SAP is doing this, too. "The heaviest use for Chatter will be around sales," says Zach Nelson, who runs Salesforce rival Netsuite (which is backed by Ellison). "Meanwhile every application will have a social component, and it will be free."

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Returning to Alienation

EXPLOITATION

Exploitation?

- "…productive activities that are pleasurably embraced and at the same time often shamelessly exploited"-- Terranova
- "The biomass not social relations is today's site of exploitation" – Galloway and Thacker
- "in those networks of culture and communication, collective subjectivities are produced and sociality is produced – even if those subjectivities and that sociality are directly exploitable by capital" -- Hardt
- "the post-Fordist production process directly exploits the communitarian dimension of social life" -- Arvidsson.
- This new form of capitalism as expressed on the Internet and the Web is about nurturing, exploiting and exhausting the 'cultural and affective production' of the labor force -- Elmer

What does it have to do with Marx?

- Analyzes the ways in which the seemingly freely agreed upon wage-labor exchange is structured by conditions of coercion.
- It directs us toward the social relations that structure free exchange: in particular the forms of separation that are enforced by coercion (and reproduce it).
- It provides an ethical critique of alienation: not just an issue of profit, but also one of control over one's own productive activity.

Exploitation revisited

- ## What it's not:
    - Reducible to a sense of victimization ("Why do people fight for their servitude as stubbornly as though it were their salvation?" – D&G A-O).
    - The mere fact of benefit from an another's productive activity. Collaboration is not exploitation.
    - The mere fact of lack of payment (see above)

Elements of exploitation

- Coercion (even if this is embedded in "free" relations of exchange)
  - Private control over productive resources
  - The association of various forms of performance, sociality, self-expression, access to good and services with conditions of precarious labor.
- Capture of value (surplus, unpaid) that results from this coercion.
- **Alienation**: Exploitation does not merely deprive the individual of the full value realized from his or her creative activity, but of the freedom to make this activity an object of will and consciousness.

Don't be Evil

- "Exploitation is "evil" because, it "involves force and domination in manifold ways and because it deprives workers of control that should be theirs." -- Holmstrom, 1997

EPM

- "the more the worker spends himself, the more powerful becomes the alien world of objects which he creates over and against himself" (c.f.: the uses of Big Data)
- "This fact expresses merely that the object which labor produces – labor's product – confronts it as *something alien*, as a *power independent* of the producer"

Interview comments

- "My biggest thing about loss of privacy isn't other people knowing information about you but kind of being forced or bribed in a way to share your information." (Silvana, 27)

- "It's not just what you want – it's where you are, it's what you're doing, it's who you know. You are not free anymore. You are just a slave of these companies." (Julian, 31)

- You feel powerless, just out of control of what people can know about you… In general, I think we share a lot more information than we used to but then, I still feel powerless. (Carissa, 21)
- [On privacy policies:] "I agree, because what else can I do. I think that frustration sometimes just translates into I won't even think about it, because what can I do. It becomes a part of how you connect with people, it's really useful for you for your career, for your choice in life. So what else can you do?" (Cara, 20)

Alienation

- "being in the unenviable position where your life is produced for you, not by you, is as good a definition of alienation as any"
  - Erick Heroux
- "The store had figured out what their consumers needed even before they did"

The Automatic Writing of the World

" The perfect crime is that of an unconditional realization of the world by the actualization of all data, the transformation of all our acts and all events into pure information: in short, the final solution, the resolution of the world ahead of time by the cloning of reality and the extermination of the real by its double" – J. Baudrillard

Alienation

- "Alienation is a separation between human activity and its own products; it is also a situation where our products come back to us as something separate; it is a separation from active participation in the social production of values, from awareness, from oneself, from nature, from use-values, from the process of labor… and it is a separation from each other

Alienation

- Estrangement occurs when our own activity appears as something turned back against us as, "an alien power" over and against oneself.

The persistence of alienation

- The relations of capital conceals indeed the inner connection in the complete indifference, exteriorization and *alienation* in which it places the worker in relation to the conditions of the realization of his own labor. Kap., vol III

Concerns

- Abuse (identity theft, data breach, fraud, etc.)
- Use
  - Influence
  - Sorting
  - Segmentation/modulation of the information environment (the "filter bubble")

The limitations of privacy

- "The bargain that we are making is a collective one, and the costs will be felt at a societal scale. When we think in terms of power, it is clear we are getting a raw deal: we grant private entities -- with no interest in the public good and no public accountability -- greater powers of persuasion than anyone has ever had before and in exchange we get free email."
-- Alexander Furnas

Google's iPhone Tracking

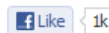*Web Giant, Others Bypassed Apple Browser Settings for Guarding Privacy*

By JULIA ANGWIN And JENNIFER VALENTINO-DEVRIES

Google Inc. and other advertising companies have been bypassing the privacy settings of millions of people using Apple Inc.'s Web browser on their iPhones and computers—tracking the Web-browsing habits of people who intended for that kind of monitoring to be blocked.

The companies used special computer code that tricks Apple's Safari Web-browsing software into letting them monitor many users. Safari, the most widely used browser on mobile devices, is designed to block such tracking by default.

Google disabled its code after being contacted by The Wall Street Journal.

WSJ's Jennifer Valentino-DeVries has details of Google and other advertising companies that were bypassing privacy levels set by users of Apple's Safari browser on their iPhones. Photos: Getty Images

The Google code was spotted by Stanford researcher Jonathan Mayer and independently confirmed by a technical adviser to the Journal, Ashkan Soltani, who found that ads on 22 of the top 100 websites installed the Google tracking code on a test computer, and ads on 23 sites installed it on an iPhone browser.

The technique reaches far beyond those websites, however, because once the coding was activated, it could enable

- Rather than caring about what they know about *me,* we should care about what they know about *us.*
- For the most part, the ethical implications of widespread deployment of persuasive technologies remains unexamined.

Personal Information

- Personal information is information that identifies you or could identify you. In addition to name and address, personal information can also include medical records, bank account details, photos, videos, and even information about what you like, your opinions and where you work - basically, any information where you are *reasonably identifiable*.

- To be precise, the Privacy Act definition of personal information is:

  "... information or an opinion (including information or an opinion forming part of a database), whether true or not, and whether recorded in a material form or not, about an individual whose identity is apparent, or can reasonably be ascertained, from the information or opinion."

Sensitive Information

- information or an opinion about an individual's:
- (i) racial or ethnic origin; or
- (ii) political opinions; or
- (iii) membership of a political association; or
- (iv) religious beliefs or affiliations; or
- (v) philosophical beliefs; or
- (vi) membership of a professional or trade association; or
- (vii) membership of a trade union; or
- (viii) sexual preferences or practices; or
- (ix) criminal record;
- that is also personal information; or
- (b) health information about an individual; or
- (c) genetic information about an individual that is not otherwise health information.

Turow et al., 2009

- Even when they are told that the act of following them on websites will take place anonymously, respondents aversion remains: 68% "definitely" would not allow it, and 19% would "probably" not allow it.

- 69% of respondents feel there should be a law that gives people the right to know everything that a website knows about them.

- 92% agree there should be a law that requires "websites and advertising companies to delete all stored information about an individual, if requested to do so."

Consumer Reports survey, 2012

- A recent survey[1] by Consumer Reports found that 71 percent of respondents were "very concerned" about companies selling or sharing information gathered about them without their permission.
- Sixty-five percent of smartphone owners were "very concerned" that smartphone apps can access their contacts, photos, location, or other data on their devices without their permission.
- More than half of respondents also said they were very concerned about:
- Advertisers targeting kids with personalized ads based on data they collect while kids surf the Web (58%)
- Companies holding on to your data, even when they don't need it anymore (56%)

Community Attitudes Toward Privacy 2004

- The vast majority of respondents considered the following hypothetical situations below to be an invasion of privacy:
- a business that you don't know gets hold of your personal information (94%);
- a business monitors your activities on the internet, recording information on the sites you visit without your knowledge (93%);
- you supply your information to a business for a specific purpose and the business uses it for another purpose (93%);
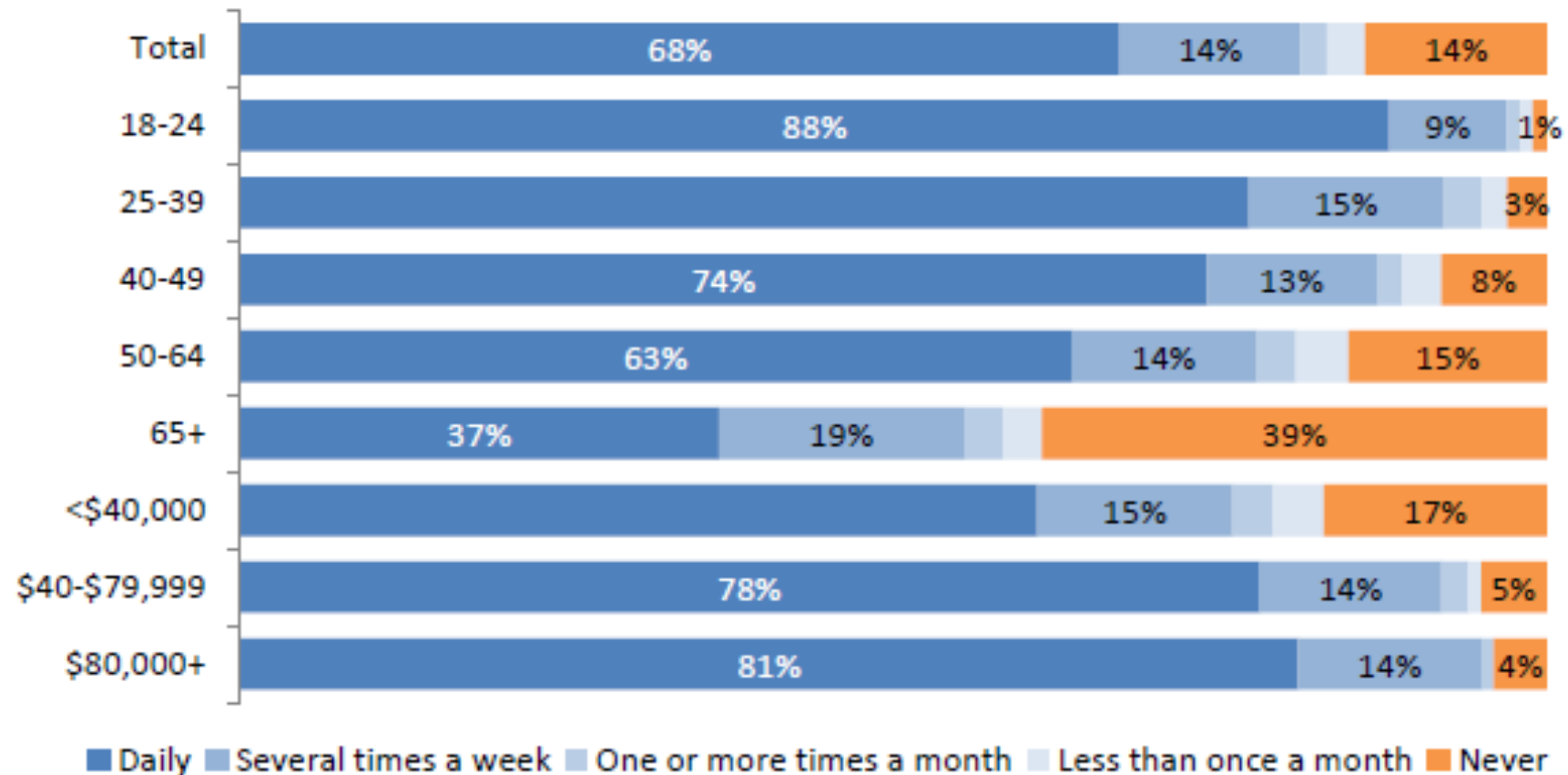
Community Attitudes Toward Privacy: 2007

- Fifty percent of respondents said they were more concerned about providing information over the Internet than they were two years ago.

- The majority of Australians (90%) are concerned about businesses sending their personal information overseas, with 63% being *very concerned.*

Q.50 Now I'm going to read you a list of companies and organizations that may collect person information about you. For each one, tell me how much you trust that company to be responsible with your information and keep it secure on a scale of zero to ten, with zero meaning you don't trust them at all to be responsible with your information and keep it secure and ten meaning you trust them completely. You can pick any number from zero to ten.

	Mean	% 10	% 8-10	% 6-10	% 0-5	DK/ Ref
[750 Respondents]						
50 (SPLIT A) Apple, the company	4.6	4	19	33	54	12
White	4.6	4	18	33	55	12
Latino	4.8	5	22	38	43	19
[750 Respondents]						
51 (SPLIT B) Twitter	2.4	3	6	10	71	18
White	2.6	3	6	10	71	18
Latino	2.1	4	6	11	67	22
[750 Respondents]						
52 (SPLIT A) Facebook	2.7	1	6	14	75	11
White	2.6	1	5	12	76	12
Latino	2.8	2	7	18	69	13
[750 Respondents]						
53 (SPLIT B) Google	3.8	4	15	28	65	7
White	4.0	4	16	31	64	6
Latino	4.0	8	18	29	58	14

Figure 2.1b Frequency of Internet Use by Demographics

Demographic	Daily	Several times a week	One or more times a month	Less than once a month	Never
Total	68%	14%			14%
18-24	88%	9%			1%
25-39		15%			3%
40-49	74%	13%			8%
50-64	63%	14%			15%
65+	37%	19%			39%
<$40,000		15%			17%
$40-$79,999	78%	14%			5%
$80,000+	81%	14%			4%

■ Daily ■ Several times a week ■ One or more times a month ■ Less than once a month ■ Never

incidence of using the internet on a daily basis (90%), particularly when compared to those who had completed year 11 or below (44%).

Figure 2.1c Frequency of Online Activities

Activity	Daily	Several times a week	One or more times a month	Less than once a month	Never
Use an online search engine	63%	24%	7%		3%
Send or receive email	62%	23%	8%		4%
Participate in a social networking site	36%	16%	7%	4%	38%
Get news through a news website	33%	21%	12%	6%	28%
Read someone else's blog	10%	13%	13%	7%	57%
Upload a photo to a website		10%	26%	16%	44%
Write a blog	4%	5%			84%
Purchase something online		10%	36%	26%	26%

■ Daily ■ Several times a week □ One or more times a month □ Less than once a month ■ Never