

Is There Privacy on The Internet?

The more the generations pass, the more privacy becomes a significant value in our society. With technology being the most critical part of our generation, privacy must be applied to it as well, but is it? How much do we blindly trust cyberspace and is it that trustable? Unfortunately, the Internet lacks a considerable amount of privacy, if not any kind of privacy.

Firstly, we have the infamous “cookies” every single website keeps asking you to accept. But are people even aware of their purpose? Cookies are used to identify your computer while using a computer network and some of them called the “HTTP” cookies are used to identify a specific user. Cookies themselves are not harmful, they are advantageous because they help you do things like logging in to a website or buying something from a store. However, cookies can carry a big amount of sensitive personal data that can easily get accessible by hackers, especially when using public Wi-Fi; and that is when it gets detrimental and risky. “Unfortunately, the original intent of the cookie has been subverted by some unscrupulous entities who have found a way to use this process to track your movements across the Web.” explains Siktide founder, Oliver Emberton. It goes without saying that someone possessing your personal data is a serious privacy matter.

Secondly, we could start thinking that hackers are the only form of troublemakers on the Internet until we find out that even some companies are not trust-worthy. Throughout the years, many big and well-known companies have been caught selling data for a considerable amount of money. For instance, ZDNet and Vice Motherboard have revealed that a group of middlemen receive location information from companies like AT&T, T-Mobile and Sprint in exchange for money. This group would then sell this information to companies like Securus, a prison communications firm. All these people have then access to the location of some user’s cellphones which can be threatening. Knowing that you do not just have to beware of hackers but also keep an eye out on well-known companies that seem trustable is concerning and can even become frustrating.

Thirdly, as mentioned before, another privacy issue on the Web are hackers. A hacker, according to Oxford Languages, is “a person who uses computers to gain unauthorized access to data”. In other words, a hacker can be described as the opposite of privacy, on the Internet. Unfortunately, cyberspace is filled with these lawbreakers and it is impossible to be 100% safe from them. Even companies, that are more protected than a vulnerable individual, only have 3% of their folders protected says Varonis, a data security and insider threat detector. Now, someone might think that if you do not put your private life on the Internet, then you are safe from getting private data stolen from these individuals. This hypothesis is partly correct, the less you open about your private life on the Web, the most it minimizes your chances of getting crucial private data stolen. On the other hand, in the era of technology we live in, it is nearly impossible to not have any private information on this platform; even your bank account can be accessed using the Internet.

Complete privacy or even partial privacy is something difficult to achieve on the Internet. Hackers, untrustable companies, the unfamous “cookies”, and the list goes on, make this significant value in our society almost unattainable on this platform. No matter where we go or what we do, life teaches us to stay vigilant and attentive to our surroundings and the Internet is not an exception. Blind trusting is a dangerous game. After all, as the saying says: “even salt looks like sugar”.