

4 ways the fight over data is getting way more personal

[Technology](#)



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Nobody feels particularly threatened when they are served a well-targeted ad online. It makes sense that if you Google vacation destinations in Puerto Rico that somehow an algorithm on the Internet will allow Kayak to flood your screen with hotel promotions. That is not sinister; it is just odd.

But the things that are done with people's personal data (and the things we search for on Google should be personal, right?) are increasingly crossing the line into a darker area that no one really wants to talk about. Thankfully, public awareness on the issue is rising thanks to high profile phone hacks, legislation that has been passed and .

A problem of this magnitude is also an opportunity of equal magnitude for an entrepreneur with the right idea. Though, in this case, there is room for a crowd of entrepreneurs, several government initiatives and probably some lawsuits.

These are four ways data is (and must) get way more personal and how entrepreneurs can play a part:

<https://assignbuster.com/4-ways-the-fight-over-data-is-getting-way-more-personal/>

1. The social revolution.

Facebook is still the premier social network, even if it is increasingly surrounded by younger networks with sleeker features. As such, it plays a leadership role in the business of setting precedent for user data harvesting. According to Julian Ranger, personal data expert and founder of, the value of the data Facebook collects is worth.

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" It is said you cannot know the value of something until you measure it and Facebook has lead the industry in its acquisition, organization and exploitation of data," says Ranger. " But how is it Facebook's right to have a file on personal users? And shouldn't the user have the right to allow or not allow that data to be sold to other companies?"

There are those in the private sector who think so and they are starting to fight back. Tech company offers an app that will tell you what data your phone is sending via the apps that are installed on it. If you are not outraged about invasive data practices yet, you will be soon after installing Spy Aware.

2. The regulatory revolution.

Laws are and will be an important step returning the power of data back to the people. But to-date there have been few successes to point to. The European Union passed the (GDPR) which does signal a shift from the wild west of data collection to a world with a few laws and borders. But functionally the law does little to return full ownership of people's personal

data and companies are already preparing with elaborate compliance mechanisms that will help them to carry on with.

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" The GDPR is a step in the right direction, but it falls far short of turning the tables on who owns the data," notes Ranger. " And that makes sense, much of the economy is run on the free flow of information. The challenge is to reshape the system so that individuals can selectively sell their own information for a value proposition that works for them."

3. The technology revolution.

The Internet, for all of its benefits, is controlled by powerful companies. Accordingly, for users to be safe on the Internet, they need to level the playing field, which will require some powerful technological solutions.

Users need to have the ability to locally store their data and control who has access to it. Ranger's digi. me offers a platform that allows users to do that with all of their social media data and has plans to expand into other areas.

The opportunities and needs are almost endless in this area. Users need tools that alert them about data leaks, allow them to control their data, and provide the means for them to selectively share it. The technology world has its work cut out for it, to be sure. But demand is such that the project is already underway.

4. The public opinion revolution.

Public opinion oscillates based on the news of the day, so to suggest what the public thinks about anything is presumptuous. But in an effort to understand the underlying causes that motivate people's opinions on sharing their personal data, Columbia Business School of 8, 000 people across generational divides. What they found was that for the right value proposition (a promotion or a discount) 80 percent of people would share their information with a company that wanted it.

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The doomsayers who think that data privacy will grind the global economy to a halt must consider the possibility that many people just want to have ownership over their data and the right to disseminate it in a way that benefits them in return. It will be exciting to see how entrepreneurs step into this space. In the same way that the Internet connected us in a way that few people could have imagined, returning data to its owners could change the Internet into a vastly different place yet again.