

Does privacy exist on the internet

[Technology](#), [Internet](#)



The purpose of the report is to look at the impact of the internet, specifically social media sites and society. The reason why I decided to choose to do this report was because of the huge impact that the internet has had on our lives during recent years, in particular social media and social networking websites. Many people believe that privacy doesn't exist anymore and that the internet has allowed peoples' lives to be an open book and be viewed by anyone and anywhere.

Although some people would disagree on this, others focus on Social networking sites being the main cause of privacy not existing anymore, with the large increase of internet users everyday more and more people are using the internet and social networking sites which ultimately decreases the chances of privacy existing, sites such as MySpace, Facebook, Bebo and Google+ are all big names which allow people to set up profiles with details about themselves and can typically be seen by anyone with a computer around the world.

As for those without or access to a computer, there is all sorts of information about individuals that is readily available by anyone who is searching for something specific. An example would be information collected by the government e. g. a census is conducted every 10 years in the United Kingdom and this information is all stored by the government and readily available on the internet.

The methods that will be used when conducting the report will be by researching different media and networking sites and looking if they really do allow some sort of privacy setting, as well as researching the topic in more depth and the laws behind privacy protecting individuals on the <https://assignbuster.com/does-privacy-exist-on-the-internet/>

internet, as well as viewing other people's views to try and come to a conclusion, as to whether privacy does or doesn't exist with the influence of internet and social websites having a large influence on our lives. However, the report will also look into whether we really care about our privacy?

As the number of users of social media and networking sites is rapidly growing daily and users are aware of their privacy being exploited by the internet. Introduction: Technology has grown and advanced vastly over the years, recent studies on technology have shown that this has led to people having even more reliance on technology. Particularly the internet, which is used by billions over the world daily, this has therefore led to much debate over privacy concerns on the internet with hacking still being a big problem.

The impact of social media websites allows the world to view details about individuals as well as cookies and search engines, these internet tool save information on users for their own use without asking permission, in the same way 3rd party advertisements manipulate users of the internet based on their searches, however this will be discussed in more detail throughout the report. The internet has ultimately allowed anyone to find information about anyone very easily.

The internet is defined as (Dictionary, 2002) " A system connecting computers around the world using TCP/IP, which stands for Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol, a set of standards for transmitting and receiving digital data. The Internet consists primarily of the collection of billions of interconnected web pages that are transferred using HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol), and are collectively known as the World Wide

Web. The Internet also uses FTP (File Transfer Protocol) to transfer files, and SMTP (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol) to transfer e-mail. " img.

1 - showing the impact that the internet has had on the world over a number of years. A survey done by The Nielsen Company (2011) showed that there has been a huge increase in the number of social networking users from 2000-2011, the increase was 82%. Across the globe over the past year, average time spent on social networking sites grew from 3 hours per month to 5.5 hours. In addition Nielsen concluded that overall social media sites such as Facebook are now the most common homepages for users and that people now spend the majority of their internet time using social networks or blogs.

img. 2 Nielsen Company (2011) The impact that the internet has had on society has caused much debate on privacy existing anymore, Internet privacy is defined as " involving the right of personal privacy concerning the storing, repurposing, providing to third-parties, and displaying of information pertaining to oneself via the Internet. Privacy can entail both Personally Identifying Information and non-Personally Identifying information such as a site visitor's behaviour on a website. Personally Identifying Information refers to any information that can be used to identify an individual.

For example, age and physical address alone could identify who an individual is without explicitly disclosing their name, as these two factors are unique enough to typically a specific person. " As the internet develops more and more people are being aware of privacy issues which has led to laws being put in place to protect individuals online for their safety, these laws include (Clark and Verkaik, 2009) the Data Protection Act 1998 that covers the <https://assignbuster.com/does-privacy-exist-on-the-internet/>

personal data of people in which websites have to comply with. These laws are set as guidelines to regulate the way in which websites use and store the information we share about ourselves.

However, internet laws are not universal and specific laws only apply to the country that they are created in, this allows cybercriminals to get around this and exploit specific laws to obtain information about people. Privacy Doesn't Exist An article by CNET News (2008) shown that companies such as Google are being sued. Google was being sued by a couple in America for posting images of its house on the Internet in Google's Street Views pages. Google Street View, allows anyone in the world to view a street view of most places in the world.

Google responded on the matter by stating that privacy simply doesn't exist in today's world and the papers that were filed in court by Google stated that " today's satellite image technology means that even in today's desert, complete privacy does not exist. " This can be backed up by satellites, cameras and other monitoring devices all being tied together by the Internet, it is becoming more and more difficult to completely isolate yourself from view. However, does this mean that our own privacy is in the hands on otherwise such as large corporations e. g. Google?

Social Networking Privacy Social Networking websites continue to grow on a huge scale with Facebook announcing that they have reached over 500 million worldwide users and Twitter soon to be reaching the benchmark of 50 million tweets per day. To get a realistic view of the amount of users this is, there are over 7 times active Facebook users globally then there are people in the UK! Img. 3 That is a lot of information that Facebook holds about <https://assignbuster.com/does-privacy-exist-on-the-internet/>

individuals globally, projections have shown that this figure will grow up to and over 630 million users by the end of 2011. img. 4

Are we bothered about privacy on the internet? Due to Facebook's large attraction, other social networking sites have emerged such as Google+. However, in terms of user privacy a lot of people do believe that with Google+ we are reaching a new era of privacy and security on social media. After using Google+ the concept of circles is indeed an easy to use interface to quickly split your friends, colleagues and family into different categories. However, creating such groups is nothing new as Facebook has been offering this for quite some time in the form of lists rather than 'circles'.

Some users are aware of not making their profile open to everyone and to ensure to only share some information with a limited amount of "friends" online. However, does this really make your information private? Research suggests that people should only post and display information about yourself on social networking sites that you want everyone in the world to view. However, even when this is done, this doesn't stop people from hacking into your account with only limited authentication methods such as password only.

From conducting a general survey I found that most people on the internet have a universal password that they use for all or most of their accounts made on the web. Therefore a website that a user visited years ago and inputted the same password could be hacked into and made available to the public. Even in cases where users haven't been hacked, people share data without them even knowing, in some instances such as geo-tagging, pictures

are taken and uploaded to the internet or shared to others, this allows others to see where a picture was taken and the location of where the person is.

The fact that we do share our information and join up to networking sites questions whether we are really bothered about our privacy as much as it is being debated about, and whether the term ' friend' means something completely different on the internet? As some of the people that are ' friends' on social networking sites people may have not even met before. Facebook creator, Mark Zuckerberg shares a similar view on this (RWW 2010). During a press conference Zuckerberg talked about Facebook and its privacy specifically.

He said that the " age of privacy is over now and if he were to start Facebook as a new startup today, he would make user information public from the get-go. " He later went on to explain that " blogging and similar endeavors have taken off in the past five or six years and with it, more and more people are putting themselves out there, on the Internet, sharing their personal information. " People have therefore become used to this, allowing it to become some sort of norm in society that people are comfortable to share information about each other as to whether they would 10 years ago.

However, we may care about privacy when it is set in a different situation such as parents spying on their children. An article written by The Observer (2003) feared of paedophiles 'grooming' children on the internet, which has now led to parents using software to monitor what their children do and say online. These programmes can record and analyse every word typed into a computer while a child surfs the net. Some of the software's program can compile daily or weekly reports and email them to parents who can check for <https://assignbuster.com/does-privacy-exist-on-the-internet/>

signs of paedophile activity or see if their children have sought access to unsuitable websites.

The reports give a detailed breakdown of what the child typed into chat rooms, emails or message boards and also replies given by others. Laws & Regulations A recent study done by the BBC (2011) found that some development has been made to internet law, as now users will receive a warning if sites do not respect their privacy thanks to new tools being developed by the web's standards setting body called the 'The World Wide Web Consortium' (W3C) who want to help users control how their personal data is managed.

It is designing controls to shield personal data and reveal when sites do not honour privacy requests. W3C have commented that " Users have the feeling they are being tracked and some users have privacy concerns and would like to solve them," said Dr Matthias Schunter from IBM who chairs the W3C group drawing up the Do Not Track technologies.