

Internet privacy

Technology, Information Technology



(Teacher's Internet Privacy is Necessary (For the audience unsure about internet privacy) Aaron Olson, a Minnesota man, took his uncle Randall Labrie to court on the charge of harassment after Labrie posted in Facebook Olson's childhood photos taken in front of a Christmas tree. The Minnesota district court judge Natalie Hudson threw out the case as silly, for no harm was done to Olson by the posting of the pictures. At the other end, last year, fraudsters emptied the bank account of a close friend of mine because one of the firms with which he had to share his personal information online to obtain services had passed it to the fraudsters. Faced with such cases, people have argued for and against internet privacy – i. e. prevention of unauthorized sharing of information online – since the arrival of information society. Conservatives -- who ideologically favor individual freedom, small government, tax cuts for the rich and reduction of benefits to the poor to encourage private initiatives -- reject internet privacy measures as something that go against their principles. Liberals, who see a big role for government to provide basic services and help the needy and poor, usually support internet privacy to maintain peace and order in society. Both have plausible but extreme positions. Independent of any political leaning, I strongly support internet privacy measures on moral, legal and personal grounds to prevent companies and individuals from sharing personal information without the client's specific authorization. Morality and ethics demand that we protect internet privacy of individuals. The author and media critic Jeff Jarvis, who garnered public support by sharing the information after he was diagnosed with cancer, speaks against additional measures to protect internet privacy (quoted in Johnson). As long as it is

voluntary, there is no problem, but moral and ethical problems arise when someone shares other people's personal information or intellectual property, without their authorization. Think of this – a bully humiliates your child at school and posts the photo of it on the internet for everyone to know, which is morally wrong and which causes emotional harm to your child, keeps him/her from school and ruins his/her life. An Illinois woman whose husband was diagnosed having cancer was appalled by the email carrier selling private information (Court). Legally, US Supreme Court has established right to privacy through its various verdicts (usconstitution. net) and states like California recognize privacy as one of the inalienable rights of individuals (Court). Unauthorized distribution of personal information by individuals, banks or companies is already illegal because it breaches these legal provisions, and the same provisions should be extended to online information as well. Such sharing of information could destroy people's lives -- as a raped woman who wants to keep the horrendous crime against her from the public to protect her dignity would be devastated or even commit suicide if someone puts that information on line. On personal level, I believe every individual must have the freedom to live their life the way they want within the broadly accepted legal and social parameters, and sharing private information online without the consent of the concerned person seriously intrudes upon this freedom. Although Republican members of Congress defeated the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) and Protect IP Act viewing them as measures to curtail creativity and freedom of speech (Weisman), 90 percent Americans support legislation to protect their online privacy (Court). The Republicans in Congress valued the freedom of big companies to share

their clients' personal information and profit from it more than protecting the clients' right to internet privacy. This is against public opinion and against us, because it puts us in harm's way without our knowledge -- we might lose our money, as my friend did last year, and we might lose our lives if we allow companies and people to share our private information so your enemies could follow and harm us. Essentially, the challenge is to strike the right balance between the freedom of speech and right to privacy to build a peaceful and harmonious society. One of the fundamental legal principles is that the exercise of one's freedom must not infringe on others' rights. The Minnesota judge clearly missed this point in the case of Aaron Olson, for she protected Randall Labrie's freedom but failed to protect Olson's right to keep his Christmas photos private. In case my friend who lost money, the freedom of the bank or company to share his online information and profit from it led to the emptying of his bank account, causing direct financial harm to him. As an independent, I am free of any political bias. People like us must rise above parochial political considerations and do what is best for the United States and American people. On moral, legal and personal grounds, we must support measures, including SOPA, to protect internet privacy the law that empower us -- not a bank, a company, a friend or an enemy -- to decide what we share online and what we do not. Works cited Court, Jamie. "Invading Our Privacy on the Internet." Los Angeles Times (Op-ed). 27 December 2010. Web. 31 March 2012. Johnson, Steven. "Web Privacy: In Praise of Oversharing." Time Magazine (Business Section). 20 May 2010. Web. 31 March 2012. USconstitution. net. "Things That Are Not in the US Constitution." US Constitution Online. Web. < <http://www.usconstitution.net>

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