Peer-Produced Privacy Violations

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outline

• definitions
• social motivations
• social risk assessment
• social harms
• three questionable “solutions”
social network sites
definition (boyd/Ellison)

1. profiles
2. links
3. social graph
examples

• Friendster
• Facebook
• MySpace
• [YouTube, Flickr, &c.]
2
social motivations
identity

• impression management
• Fakeesters
• groups, wall posts, &c.
relationship

• make new friends
• associate with current ones
• reconnect with old ones
• exchange gifts, wall posts, &c.
community

- social networks
- visualization
- conspicuous friending
3 social risk evaluation
misleading heuristics

• The water’s fine; come on in
• Safety in numbers
• I think we’re alone now
• Nobody in here but us chickens
• You know me, old buddy, old pal
• I know how much this means to you
• Cut it out! Do you think I can’t see you?
facebook is a privacy virus
4
social privacy harms
disclosure

• deans
• police
• employers
• stalkers
• etc.
surveillance

• it’s also creepy just to be watched

• News Feed = real-time mass surveillance
instability

- Facebook profiles weren’t searchable . . .
- . . . until they were
- Beacon leaked information in a way that users couldn’t have anticipated
- bugs, breaches, leaks, &c.
disagreement

• I want to be your Facebook friend
  • what if you don’t want to be mine?
• I upload a photo of you
  • what if you don’t want it online?
spillovers

• inference on social network graphs
• networks naturally grow
• Facebook used to be Harvard-only
• then college-only
• &c.
denigration

• other users disrupt your self-presentation
• graffiti on your Wall
• when worlds collide
• Beacon hijacks profiles for endorsements
5

“solutions”
privacy policies?

- readership low
- comprehension lower
- “Therefore, we cannot and do not guarantee that User Content you post on the Site will not be viewed by unauthorized persons.”
technical controls?

- facebook’s controls are outstanding
- but people don’t use them
- technical rules don’t solve social problems
- ambiguous relationships
- friends you can’t trust
data ownership?

- yes, you could take “your” data with you
- but it’s your contacts’ data, too
- interoperability creates security holes
- and a privacy race to the bottom
questions?

for the full treatment:

“Facebook and the Social Dynamics of Privacy” (draft)