**Is Privacy a Choice?**

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Privacy is about the appropriate flow of information and the web understood a violation of privacy is information that flows inappropriately, that violates certain values we may have. What's happening is that new technology can … present us with different problems, ones we've never confronted before.

There are people in my field who might look at a Facebook or a Google and say,

“You've become like a utility company.” The public utilities are highly regulated because how many of us could live without electricity, without running water?

And so participating in social media, some might argue, is not option anymore. For example, you apply for a job. And as many employers do, they go and check you out on Facebook. But let's say you don't have a Facebook page. Then they may say, “Why didn’t she have a Facebook page? That's a bit unusual.” So, yes, it's true that these companies come in and offer certain services and they said these are the terms of the services. But ultimately, some might argue you don't have a choice.

I think there've been many businesses who really try to do the right thing, but their backs are up against the wall. If they don't accept some the activities that the ad networks monitor across sites and do the analytics and profiling, their businesses can be threatened significantly. So we're saying it's great for you to be profitable and, yes, we understand you're providing great service but that doesn't give you a free pass. Right now we really are in dire need of meaningful rules to level the playing field so the values to which we subscribe as societies, as cultures, as communities, can continue to be maintained.

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The release by Ed Snowden highlighted the extent of NSA surveillance. I think people suddenly had a much sharper sense of how intrusive that can really be. So the question is whether there's a transparency in the process, whether we can break out of the bubble if we want.