

To share or not to share

Every day we are closer to digital society where every piece of information is available to anyone. We are voluntarily giving up our personal data in exchange for convenience, but is it good idea to leave all the security and privacy behind and share every little bit of your life with the world?

We might not be aware of it, but any information we share is stored forever. Not only the good things, but also our mistakes, flaws and much more. If you upload it, you no longer have control over it, it belongs to someone else. We are building our digital footprint one piece at time, each one of us. Some more rapidly than the others, but there is a bit about everyone. We should keep this in mind, because once you make something about you public, it will affect your life forever.

Every little piece of data we share stays. And there is information we share without even knowing about it. For example almost all photos taken with smartphone contain information about place where it was taken. We might not share place where we live, however we do not hesitate to post a picture of our house, unknowingly giving away not only place and much more.

We share all this data just to be more social, to be more open. So that we could demonstrate publicly that we have life, family, friends and everything else. We try so hard to look same as the others, that we forget what are we about to lose. However we abandon our privacy not only to be social, but also just for convenience. It is quite simple decision, you share more and on the positive side of this you see quite lot of benefits. Your friends can call you any time, because your phone number is public, you get gifts you want, because you had mentioned it somewhere on one of your social networks. People know when you are busy, because your calendar is also public and much more. One could get used to it.

Yet this is not all there is to it. Soon you will discover, there is also the dark side of sharing everything with wide public. You will never be able to hide something, anything embarrassing that might happen will be immediately shared. Anyone would know, that your high school grades were quite miserable and that you once had fallen down during graduation ceremony. You might say, that this is of no concern to anyone and you might be right, but what if company recruiter had all your life on social networks available to his disposal. Do you think he would hire you, or would he say that this company needs somewhat more serious person than you are, because your profile looks like one constant party.

You might not know about it, but this is currently happening. All public information about you is evaluated constantly, you might not even know about it. But we were talking only about your friends and other people that might get to know something new about you. It might not be exactly pleasing, but there is not much more to it.

What about the internet? What if someone collected all the information about you he could get and combined it into one enormous database. And what if this database would be in hands of one single company. All the information about you, your habits, things you like, things you buy, music you listen to, sound of your voice, your fitness routine, your friends and much more. All this information in one place would make someone really powerful. Not only it would contain almost everything, but one would be able to derive from it almost everything else. What would the impact be on advertising and could it be used to change your opinions, to shape your personality to the image of someone else?

How would you react, if this wasn't fiction. If it was quite real. By combining usage data from your browser, smartphone and social network accounts you definitely very close to this scenario, you might even be there. Now it sounds little bit scary, to give up your privacy just for convenience, doesn't it? I am not saying, that sharing is wrong and that all data should be kept private, there just should be a limit to it.