"UNRAVELING THE PRIVACY PARADOX"

USERS, ONLINE ENVIRONMENT, AND THE LUXURY OF PRIVACY

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KEY QUESTIONS

– Q1. Is privacy dead?

– Q2. Are users irrational?

– Q3. Are personal data vaults the silver bullet solution?

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Q1. IS PRIVACY DEAD?

PRIVACY?!

"Living the public life is the new default"

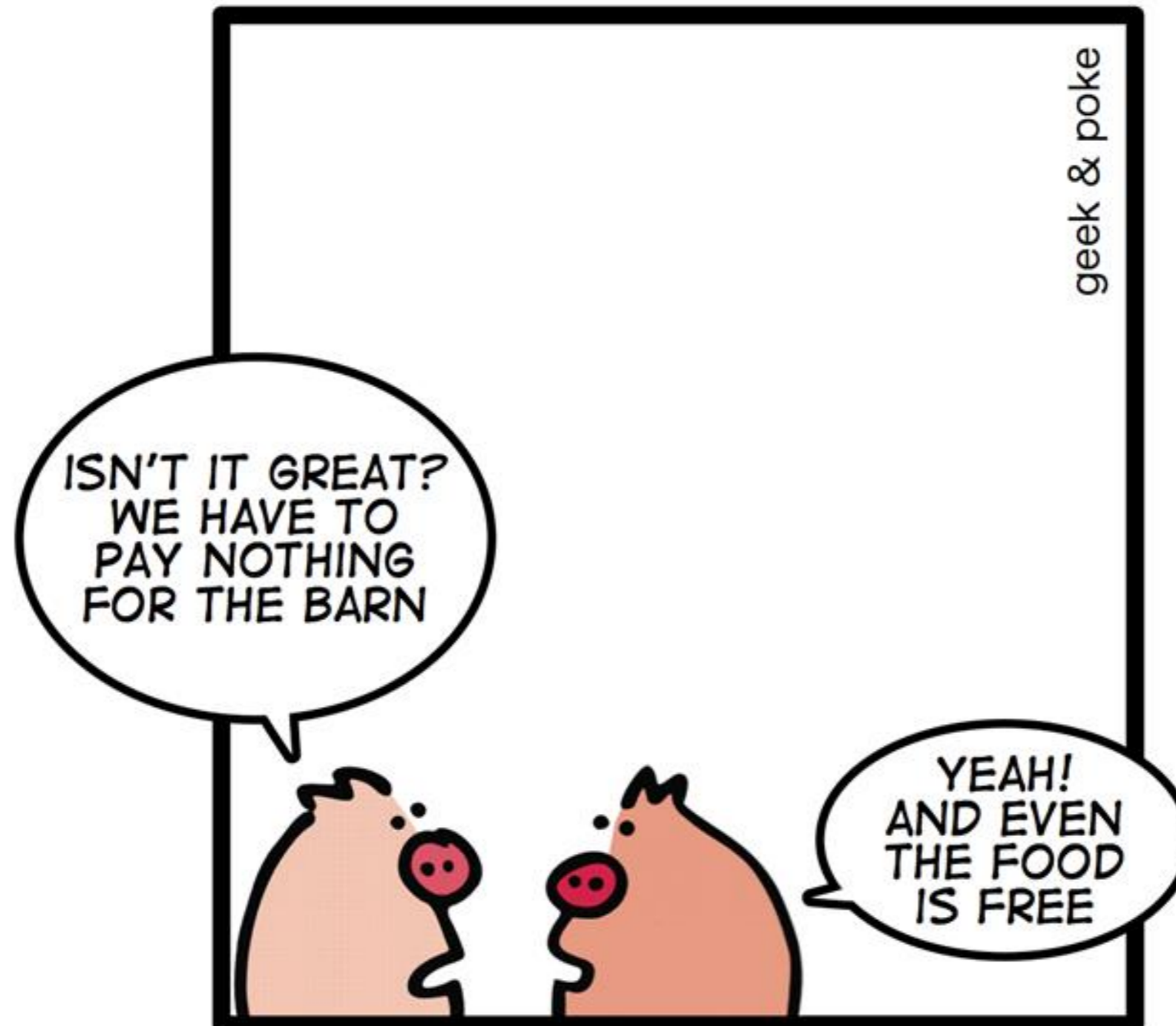*"Transparency will replace privacy as the social norm and ideal"*

"Privacy is a passing artifact of the industrial age"

PROJECT BY @DRIESDEPOORTER

INSTAGRAM

OPEN CAMERA

person |0.83692779|

car |0.97021466|

person |0.82610|

person |0.7765408|

PRIVACY?!

PRIVACY?!

Privacy… a the right to be let alone

(Warren and Brandeis, 1890)

Privacy… as control over personal information

(Westin, 1967)

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PRIVACY AND THE SOCIAL MEDIA LOGIC

– Privacy as a commodity ("free" services)

– "Public by default, privacy through effort"

– Privacy as a luxury commodity (Papacharissi, 2010)

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Q2. ARE USERS IRRATIONAL?

THE BIGGEST LIE ON THE INTERNET (OBAR & OELDORF-HIRSCH, 2020)

Voor- en achternaam

Email

☐ Ik heb de privacyverklaring gelezen en ga ermee

akkoord

Inschrijven

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"USERS ARE THE WEAKEST LINK"

– "Adults are concerned about invasion of privacy, while teens freely give up information" (Barnes, 2006)

- "Teens are lazy and need to be educated"

- "Children are vulnerable and need to be protected"

– Privacy paradox

- High privacy concern -> low privacy management

- High privacy concern -> high self-disclosure

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UNLIMITED SHARING AS A PRIVACY STRATEGY (BOYD, 2014)

*"In a world in which posting updates is common, purposeful, and performative, **sharing often allows teens to control a social situation more than simply opting out. It also guarantees that others can't define the social situation.** Sitting in an afterschool program in Los Angeles, I casually asked a teen participant why she shared so many embarrassing photos of herself on her profile. She laughed and told me that it was a lot safer if she shared her photos and put them in context by what she wrote than if she did not because she knew that her friends also had embarrassing photos. They'd be happy to embarrass her if she let them. But by taking preemptive action and mocking herself by writing dismissive messages on photos that could be interpreted problematically, she undermined her friends' ability to define the situation differently. After explaining her logic, she continued on to explain how her **apparent exhibitionism left plenty of room for people to not focus in on the things that were deeply intimate in her life."***

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(CREATIVE) PRIVACY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

— Common denominator approach (Hogan, 2010)

  – Front/back stage

— Social steganography (boyd, 2011)

  – Encoding messages that can only be decoded by a select group of people, even though many more have access to the encrypted message.

— Managing content together (De Wolf, 2016)

  – Organizing a slide show evening where all pictures of camp are presented and a selection is made before it is allowed on Facebook or website.

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PRIVACY FATIGUE (DE WOLF, 2020)

- "What can I really do?"

  - Privacy fatigue? (M=3.65; SD=1.22)

    As an individual you have little control over online privacy

    Adjusting your personal privacy settings has little impact

    It is impossible, as an individual, to control your personal information by yourself

    It is impossible to control who shares information about yourself

    In general, I have the feeling that I can exert little control over my personal information

  - No relationship with personal privacy management

 - Positive relationship with interpersonal privacy management

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BUT… USERS AS RATIONAL AGENTS?

– Transparency paradox: privacy notices that are sufficiently detailed to have an impact on people's privacy decisions are often too long, detailed and complex for people to read

– Control paradox: states that while users claim to want full control over their data, they avoid the hassle of actually exploiting this control. In combination with overly permissive defaults, this leads to a predominance of over-sharing.

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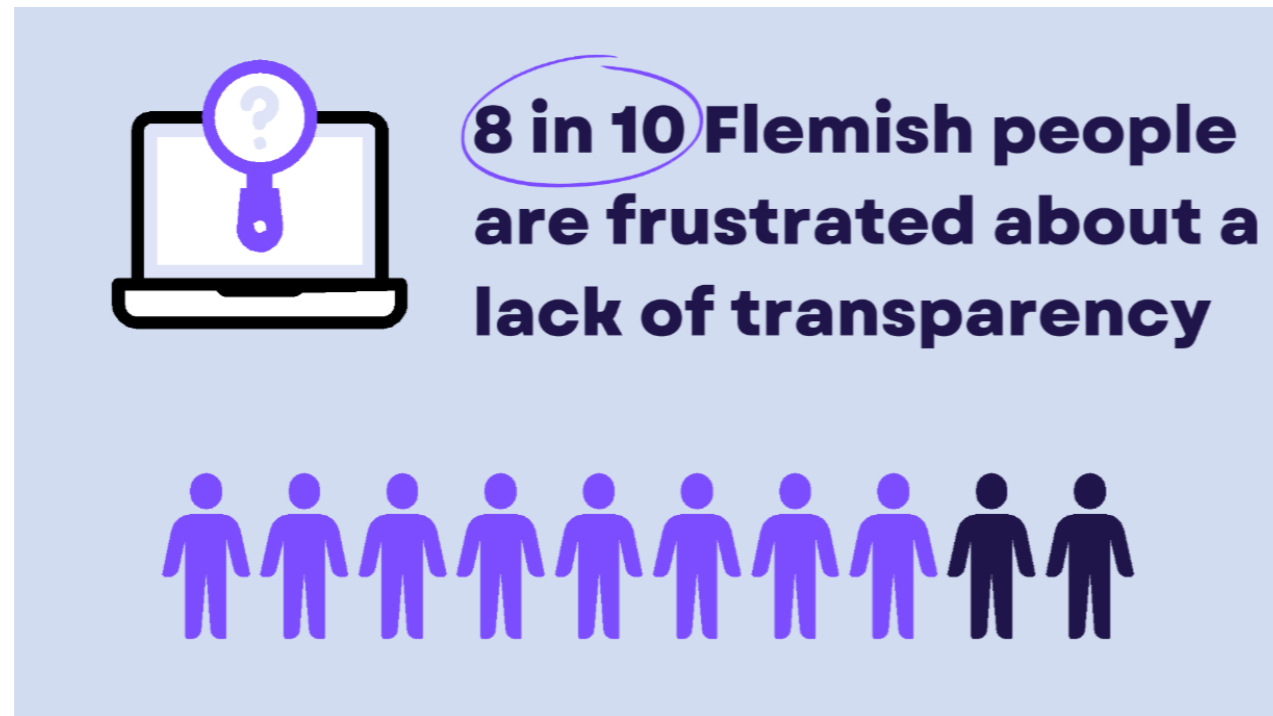# CONTROL PARADOX (KNIJNENBURG, 2013)

CONTROL PARADOX
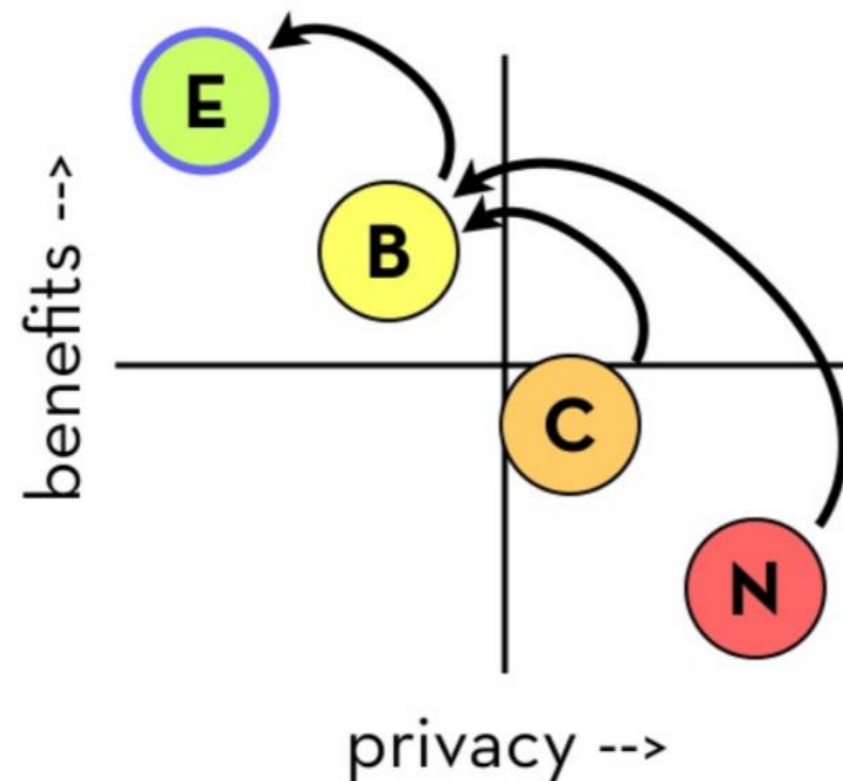
- B = Block; C = City; N = Nothing; E= exact location

- Exact (E) option was later added:

- Expected: some will chose for Exact location instead of Block location

- Result: Everyone moved from a less extreme option to a more extreme option. (not just B -> E)

KEY QUESTIONS

- ## Q1. Is privacy dead?
    - Depends on how you define privacy and what you (don't) take into account
    - But... mind the evolution of privacy as the *"right to be let alone"* towards *"privacy as a luxury commodity"*

- ## Q2. Are users irrational?
    - Young people are frequenlty unfairly accused
    - But… users are no rational agents either (bounded rationality)

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Q3. ARE PERSONAL DATA VAULTS THE SILVER BULLET SOLUTION?

SOLIDMONITOR (MAES ET AL.,2023)

8 in 10 Flemish people are frustrated about a lack of transparency

7 in 10 individuals feel they lose control of personal info

7 in 10 stand firm in their support for personal data vaults

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OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES?

- Privacy Enhancing Technologies, Access Control models, Feedback and Awareness Tools…

"Many factors contribute to the lack of adoption of these solutions, including problems with usability, bootstrapping, and network effects"

(Gürses & Diaz, 2012)

OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES?

— ""The concept of a personal data vault, as envisioned by Berners-Lee, will only truly have an effect when major tech companies like Meta or Google start implementing it. These companies would then retain less data themselves. However, for now, there is <u>no indication that they are inclined to pursue this</u>."

— "The idea of a data vault is <u>too complicated</u> for the average user."

— ""But <u>concrete applications</u> are still <u>scarce</u>."

Q3. ARE PERSONAL DATA VAULTS THE SILVER BULLET SOLUTION?

– Change vs. More of the same

– It's not (only) the technology, stupid

– Don't forget the user!

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Thank you!

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