

Technology is a threat to Privacy

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Outline

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1.1 Introduction :

- Attention grabber: Sara, an enthusiastic college girl and a fashion icon of her college was obsessed to post her photos daily on social media. One day she opened her phone, it popped 200 messages about her viral videos on website which she was unaware of.
- Thesis Statement :
Technology is a threat to privacy in many ways such as: data leakage, scams, phishing, data sold on dark web, inappropriate use of photos, cyber bullying, online harassment, AI: threat to privacy, fake calls, hacking social media accounts.

1.2 Data Leakage and Breaches

Case Study 1: NAOBA, data breach of millions of people.

Case Study 2: In 2024, data breach of Hajj pilgrims.

Case Study 3: facebook Cambridge analytical scandal (2018)

1.3 Online Scams:

Case study: NC CIA report.

1.4 Online Phishing:

The fake ~~finds~~ financial aid scheme message. (case study)

1.5 Data sale on Dark web, the dilemma of modern technology

Case reference: NADRA data breach and selling on dark web

Case study: LinkedIn case (2021)

Case study: Coca Cola case (2025)

1.6 Inappropriate Use of photos

Blackmailing, heavy ransom demand, exploiting the photos of victims

1.7 Cyber Bullying

Research point: WHO study (Stats)

1.8 Online Harassment

Case study: PEW Research.

PECA, FIA agencies in Pakistan.

1.9 AI: potential threat to privacy

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1-10 Fake calls (propaganda to
blackmail victim)

Case study: NCMEC report

1-11 Online Hacking on Social Media
Case study: Twitter hack case (2020)

1-12 Suggestions / Preventive
measures

1-13 Conclusion

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Roll English Essay

❖ Technology is a Threat to Privacy

The world has immensely advanced and transformed in terms of technology over the past few decades. In 21st century, owing to the technological advancements the world has become a global village. Technology is creating a utopic world for modern computer scientists. Among many technological advancements such as Robotics etc is AI (Artificial Intelligence) which in itself is both bane and boon for humanity. No doubt technological advancements are a blessing for humanity but turned into a curse somehow.

The major threat that the world is facing is privacy breach due to highly advanced technology. In the 21st century, the rise of technology has posed many questions on privacy breach and other issues including, scams and phishing etc and is concerning people who are linked with it.

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A dark reality of the modern and globalized world: as technology advances, so do the risks of using it. A serious threat to humanity which if not controlled, may control us in future. Technology is a threat to privacy in many ways such as: data leakage, scams, phishing, data sold on dark web, inappropriate use of photos, cyber bullying, online harassment, AI fake calls, hacking social media accounts.

One of the major threats that technology users face is the fear of data usage and leakage by hackers and scammers. The private data of people like family pictures, passwords, bank accounts get hacked and inappropriately used by third parties. Data often gets leaked due to negligence of some institutions. For example, NADRA Pakistan, where data of millions of people was hacked and sold on dark web in the previous years. Behold another example, where the 2024 Hajj pilgrims who applied their documents for Hajj, their private data was hacked and sold.

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This is the true face of modern technology which is a great risk to privacy. A facebook Cambridge analytical scandal (2018): a data mining firm improperly accessed data from 87 million Facebook users to influence elections, emphasizing how personal information can be weaponized without consent.

The second major threat to privacy is scamming. where scammers pretend to be of some prestigious firms or companies to fool people for money. They deceive people in the garb of big names and trust. For example investment scams, job offer scams: fake jobs where victims pay for fake materials, shopping scams: fake websites selling non-existent or fake products, building fake partnerships to make money.

NCCIA: Online fraud crackdown results in 37 arrests nationwide after months of coordinated investigation.

The scammers take advantage of the negligence of big companies and firms and use their names to gain profit.

"I fear the day when technology overlaps with humanity
The world will only have a generation of idiots"
~ Albert Einstein

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Like scamming, another cybercrime a threat to privacy is phishing where attackers disguised as trusted entities send deceptive messages to trick victims to reveal sensitive data.

such as any malicious link, temptation (lottery), call, malware etc. For

example: Often the attackers disguised as some famous personality's (Benazir Bhutto) financial aid send a deceptive message to send details to them even if the applicant has not applied for any financial assistance.

There are many other real life examples of online phishing which has raised questions on the efficiency of cyber agencies and government institutes.

The fourth threat due to technology is the selling of data on dark web which is a more serious and grim phase of advanced technology. The data of millions of people prepared by NADRA and the data Hajj pilgrims was sold on dark web. The attackers hack the data and sell it on

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dark web where they make money in bitcoins and crypto currency.

LinkedIn (2021) case: data from 700 million user profiles was scraped and posted for sale on darkweb.

Another example of data breach is

Coca Cola (2025) case: The Everest ransomware group leaked sensitive employee documents on dark web after the company ignored a ransom demand. The data sold on dark web can further complicate and worsen the situation leading to identity theft, fraud etc.

The fifth threat is the inappropriate use of photos. Attackers hack the personal photos of the victims and use them inappropriately. It can adversely impact the victim's mental health, their relationships, reputation. In other scenarios the photos can be used for sale on web and the pictures of the victim can be used to bully them or harass for heavy ransom demand. The phishing attacks and other security breaches can easily provide access to the attackers.

The sixth privacy threat is cyber bullying in which the attackers after gaining access to the victim's information bully them to pay ransom. They threaten the victim to expose sensitive information, their accounts and pictures. These cases if not timely reported to police often leads to the suicide cases of victims especially women in remote areas. By picking call of unknown numbers, opening unknown links can also lead to data breach and cyber bullying. A WHO study found about 1 in 6 school-aged children face cyber bullying.

The seventh threat is online harassment. The attackers or even the known persons like followers and friends can harass online by using photos and links or passing vulgar comments on social media apps which can trigger a sense of discomfort and danger in the victim's mind. As per PEW Research, 41% of U.S adults experienced online harassment.

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Agencies like Pakistan's FIA investigate under laws like Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA). Online harassment cases can be controlled by severely punishing these criminals.

Eight privacy threat due to technology is caused by AI. Over the past few years, the rise of AI in technology has proven to be a blessing and a curse at the same time. It is used by scammers to condense large data. AI is frequently reading messages in the name of enhancing its features which has to be accepted by every user. Yet the issues like, AI replacing humans and unemployment were talk of the town but the dark reality or side of it which is downturned by users is the privacy breach. AI has prevailed on social apps like Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, Google, TikTok. AI has established other features such as tarot reading which needs personal information to be fetched and ID test by AI is very famous.

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The ninth one is fake calls. It is very popular scheme among scammers to befool people and to demand heavy ransom amount. Criminals use high demand tactics and often AI generated voices to trick victims into paying money. It is a virtual kidnap scam.

The national center for missing and exploited children (NCMEC) reported a massive jump in generative AI-related child exploitation reports 440,419 in 2025.

Timely report to police or crime departments can be helpful.

The last but not the least is the hacking of social media accounts of famous personalities. The attackers hack the personal accounts of celebrities to scam other or even to exploit the big personalities. The Twitter hack (2020) case where hackers gained access to high-profile accounts (Elon Musk, Joe Biden) to spread a Bitcoin scam which posed a vulnerability threat to high-profile status as well.

In order to beware of and avoid such scams some of the preventive measures to be taken / opted are as follow:

1. To avoid deceptive messages and not to respond to any message
2. Not to send any personal information to unknown numbers.
3. To avoid opening links specially send by unknown numbers
4. To inform police and higher criminal agencies.
5. Try not to upload personal information on social media (location, contact, ID).
6. The appropriate use of AI and not provide any sensitive information.

The crux of the entire debate is that the advanced the Technology, the higher the risk of privacy breaches. The data leakage cases, scams, phishing, inappropriate use of photos, cyber bullying, hacking accounts all these case studies and facts prove the technology is a threat to privacy. The future implications could be more serious if not

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controlled timely. The advancement in technology is also pointing towards its serious aftermaths and a fearful future.

"You already have zero privacy"

~ Scott McNealy

"We are losing privacy at an alarming rate"

~ John Mcgyee