

# PRIVACY IN THE AGE OF ALGORITHMS

10/28

## A. Introduction

Thesis Statement: In the modern era, the invasion of privacy has been normalized using digital algorithms to predict behavior and tracking personal information. Personal data is sold as a commodity and algorithms are used as a tool for compromising privacy.

## B. Understanding Algorithms

## C. How is privacy in the Age of Algorithms Compromised?

### 1. Algorithms tracking behavior

(Social media apps' predictive algorithms in reels, shorts)

### 2. Continuous data collection without consent

(Websites and apps collecting patterns of clicks, time spent on screen)



### 3. Data breaches and cyber security threats

(Hackers invading privacy and hacking social media accounts)

### 4. Unerasable data and the permanent digital footprint

(Data is trackable on internet in form of images, posts, search history)

### 5. Tech companies using personal data as commodity

(Meta, Google, Amazon using algorithms to sell products)

### 6. Personal data used as a business model ("Surveillance capitalism")

### 7. Invasion of privacy in name of 'Personalization'

(Businesses use data like location and preferences to target customers through ads)

### 8. Digital scams and online money theft

(Softwares with algorithms to send numerous scam messages)

### 9. Location tracking and mobility surveillance

(Apps like Uber, Careem use algorithms to track location of user)



## 10. Biometric data storage

(Fingerprint, face scan stored digitally)

## D. How to Not Let Algorithms Exploit Your Personal Data?

1. Reading privacy policies before digital participation
2. Not allowing cookies to invade personal data
3. Not granting location tracking to apps and websites
4. Deleting financial credentials on online stores
5. Creating awareness for strict and transparent policies.

## E. Conclusion

~~It is necessary~~



It is certainly not a new thing that our social media shows us exactly the same product that we talked about or mentioned to a friend. A girl is shown dresses of a brand she mentioned, a pregnant lady is being suggested ~~to~~ diapers and a teenager is getting restaurant recommendations on social media according to his cravings. All because of algorithms tracking our behavior and predicting our next move. Amidst all the tracking and capturing data, an individual's personal data is comprised and used as a source for financial gains. Algorithms work in a way that trap the user in showing exactly what the user wants to see. It has the ability to track our location, phone number and behaviour which is then utilized ~~to~~ by tech firms, leaving the user's privacy invaded and used as a commodity. In the modern era, the invasion of privacy has been normalized using digital algorithms to predict behavior and track ~~to~~ personal information. Personal data is sold as a commodity and algorithms are used as a tool for compromising privacy.



Algorithms are used by technological giants, websites and social media apps to capture user's data and predict the next content according to the user's preference. It is a type of machine learning that keeps on feeding the preferred content. Algorithms on social media can be witnessed in the form of reels. On a social app like Instagram, the feature of watching reels is the perfect manifestation of predictive algorithms. A user interacts with a reel for a minute, or likes the reel, the algorithm keeps feeding the same type of reels in the user's page. It is to keep the individual hooked on the content, grab attention and feed the desired information. Algorithms are also used by advertising agencies to run ads for business so that a user's data can be leveraged to sell products. It is labelled as digital marketing or marketing through ads but the reality is much more complex. These systems use individuals' personal data like location, address, phone number so that algorithms can feed on personal data and do its job of bombarding the user with ads and promotions. Algorithms are a way of making a user a product and by invading his privacy, the giants can feed on personal data for their gains.



Algorithms capturing data invade an individual's privacy and leave the user at the mercy of machine learning in the following ways

Firstly, algorithms track behaviour of a user and uses it accordingly. It tracks likes, time spent ~~time~~ on a certain picture and reactions.

Social media apps use predictive algorithms so that algorithm uses private data of a user and feeds the desired content through ads. The algorithm is manifested through reels and post that keep on showing content according to the users preferences. For example: a user visits a website of watches, the algorithm will make sure to show the user more business that sell watches. This is how algorithms invade privacy and exploit individual autonomy through tracking behaviour and predicting the next move.

Secondly, algorithms enable continuous data collection without little to no consent. As long as the user keep digitally participating, the algorithms keeps on tracking personal data. Websites and apps collect patterns of clicks, showing what the individual prefers more. It also tracks preferability based on time spent on a specific kind of content. This nature of algorithms capture private data without warning of privacy invasion. Instead, a user is bombarded with



vague policies and ~~no~~ privacy frameworks to bury the user under information and without asking real transparent consent. During this time, the algorithms keep on capturing data and utilize it.