Social network sites, privacy and the blurring boundary between public and private spaces

Session X – Privacy in the Internet World

Stefan Strauß and Michael Nentwich
The SNS universe

- From 1997 onwards, boosting since 2002/2003
- Various definitions (e.g. profile in the centre)
- General purpose SNS vs. specifically targeted to user groups, e.g. academia
- Different content (slides, text, video, publications, …)
- Various commercial models
- Highly dynamic environment
- Increasing inter-linkage
How SNS changed the web landscape

Web 2.0 and social media entailed:

- enhanced and new modes of interaction and collaboration
- increasing personalization
- visualization of users’ profiles and their relations to others
  - personal (contacts, friends, …) and
  - non-personal entities (interests, content used, linked, liked, produced, …)
- Towards a social search
New modes of interaction and collaboration

- Private networking, contacting
- Professional networking
- Reputation management
- Job exchange services
- Targeted marketing
- Research (cyberscience)
- Political participation (raising voice)
- Collaborative writing, action, fundraising
- …
SNS – semi-public online spaces?

- What kind of space is an SNS?
- Is it … public, private, or both – a private space in public?
- In SNS environments, social interactions and relations become explicitly visible
  → Comparable to a public square with versatile CCTV and quickly changing features
Evolution of FBs privacy settings

From shallow privacy by default …

To sneaky disclosure by default …

The contextual layers of SNS …

- **Social relations**
  - individual
  - institutional

- **User profile**
  - Personal details, actions, interests, attitudes, behaviour, …

- **Functions+ features**
  - used, produced, linked, shared, (dis-)liked, …

- **interactions**
  - friends, contacts, groups, organisations, …
The SNS universe expanding...

Alice… lost in space and conflation…

User interactions (content used, produced,...)

Outside the SNS

Social plugins

Applications from „outer space“ absorbed by: social plugins – pulled into the SNS environment

Mobile SNS geo-location, LBS

User locations and movements (online + offline)
### SNS privacy types affected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Privacy type*</th>
<th>Common SNS usage</th>
<th>Emerging SNS usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the person</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behavior and action</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>data and image</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thoughts and feelings</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>location and space</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>association (incl. group privacy)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Finn/Wright/Friedewald (2013)

---

**Magnified SNS towards augmented reality?**

- Biometrics, Face recognition
- Geo-location, LBS

---

Stefan Strauß and Michael Nentwich
SNS as food for the „surveillant assemblage“

“a heterogeneous, loosely coupled set of institutions that seek to harness the raw power of information by fixing flows of information cognitively and spatially“ (Cohen 2008)

- Behavioural tracking by 3rd parties (e.g. Quantserve, Doubleclick, Akamai, Scorecard-Research, …)
- Advanced tracking with
  - mobile SNS
  - face recognition
- Surveillance of social media by LEAs on the rise: http://tinyurl.com/74wf4z4
  
  FBI wants Backdoors in Facebook, Skype and Instant Messaging (wired 2012)
  
  Government plans increased email and social network surveillance (guardian 2012)
  
  ETSI standard for lawful interception function in cloud/virtual services (edri 2012)

  **Next generation identification** - FBI launches $1 billion face recognition project (new scientist 2012)
Major aspects fostering conflation between public and private (online) space

- Seductive modes of information gathering
- SNS as hatchery for testing new apps. and technologies
- Increasing role of biometrics
  → face recognition and social media meet in the shadows (Acquisti 2012)
- Social plugins extending diffusion of SNS to „outerspace“
- Towards a social search → mapping of social relations on a global scale
- Mobile social media on the rise (comscore 2012)
  → Mobile data traffic doubled between Q42011 and Q42012 (Ericsson 2013)
Conclusions

• SNS as indicator for increasing transformation of public and private spaces online and offline
• Integration of services and technologies foster this transformation
• Privacy protection as multidimensional challenge - lost in conflation?
• Need for revitalization of public value of privacy (Nissenbaum 2010)
• Reconsideration of the threshold between public and private spaces
• Demand for explicit decoupling of contexts and related spaces
Thank you for your attention!

Contact:
Mag. Stefan Strauß & PD Dr. Michael Nentwich
A-1030 Vienna, Strohgasse 45/5
Tel: +43 (1) 51581 6599
Fax: +43 (1) 7109883
Email: sstrauss@oeaw.ac.at
WWW: www.oeaw.ac.at/ita