

What Could Have Been,  
Is, and May Be Seen:  
The Challenges of  
Privacy

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# It is possible that we have been quite lucky

- Had the internet been designed otherwise...
- Had the designers and early adopters done otherwise...
- Had governments not failed in some areas and succeeded in others...

# It is possible that we have been quite lucky

- Traceability would have been ensured and 'push' systems pervasive.
- Data services would have been centralised.
- Communications would be insecure and privacy rules would have withered away.

Who are we kidding?

# A complacent faith in institutions is dangerous

- Our situation is not reliant on systems' designs.
- Early designers and companies are not like the framers of a constitution.
- Governments did not pack up and go home.

# What we have today is awkward

- New proposals for infrastructures and techniques emerge every day to increase data collection, yet sometimes fail.
- Privacy expectations and lousy business models have, to date, remained unresolved.
- Privacy rules are shaken at their very foundations on a daily basis, yet governments are still disorganised.

And where to from  
here?

# It's not all doom and gloom

- So long as expectation of privacy remains, then we will have some guarantees.
- So long as governments are overly ambitious the resulting techniques and technologies will under-impress
- Attempts to paint 'the picture' of the direction in which our technologies are heading are likely to end in failure.

# Dynamics

- Government interventions are getting larger with greater swipes at getting access to data with reduced protections.
- Industry continues to collect data, sometimes at behest of governments, and continues to use, abuse, and lose it.
- Technology is ascertaining greater certainty regarding location, identity, and preferences even as greater flexibility is desired.

# Conclusion

It's a mess out there, and it will likely continue to be so.

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