**Privacy Shifting**

The way that society and individuals value privacy will change, especially as technologies require the supply of more and more personal information; become smaller, cheaper, and more available; or monitor users and connect to the internet. Individuals will need to balance their value for privacy with the benefits of these new technologies.

**How It’s Developing**

Social media, mobile technologies, and internet-connected objects have introduced new conveniences and increased opportunities to connect and socialize with others. These technologies, however, in order to work, require individuals to provide information that is shared with either the public and/or with the companies that support them. Accounts are created, information is broadcast, and activity is collected, monitored, and analyzed. This has become the norm for social media, where many people have accepted the benefits of these services at the expense of the value of the information shared. Others, realizing that posting information surrenders future control over that information (and surrenders the value of that information to the benefit of companies), have chosen to balance their desire to communicate and engage by curbing their use and limiting the information shared with companies and/or the public. [[1](http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/privacy#Notes and Resources)]

Emerging trends, including the [internet of things](http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/IoT), which will introduce a multitude of uniquely identifiable devices connected to the internet, will increase the likelihood and inevitability of sharing personal information with companies and/or the public. The “smart home” composed of internet-connected devices raises privacy issues ranging from shared passwords and accounts across family members and home helpers (babysitters, house cleaners, building superintendents, etc.) to the threat of hacked software, malware, or the release of revealing data. [[2](http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/privacy#Notes and Resources)]  Smart devices collect and store information related to personal preferences like temperature or lighting and patterns like the time families arrive home or how frequently an individual exercises. Individually, these data points might not cause concern, but when put together, they might reveal intimate details individuals may not want shared.

Mobile technologies present additional concerns as they are brought into public spaces. Similar to concerns first raised when cameras and other recording devices were introduced on mobile phones, the introduction of Google Glass raised concern over the device’s recording and photography features and led some restaurants, bars, and other venues to ban the device. [[3](http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/privacy#Notes and Resources)] Drones may present similar concerns, especially as they become smarter, more autonomous, smaller and cheaper. They have the potential to photograph, document, and, if used maliciously, to spy on unsuspecting citizens. [[4](http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/privacy#Notes and Resources)]

The market for personal data - fed by data miners and sustained by marketers, financial institutions, and even employers - will spur the development of classification lists that take available personal data and compile segmented lists providing specific information about individuals. [[5](http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/privacy#Notes and Resources)] These lists may prove inaccurate, improperly anonymized, and ultimately may be linkable to the real identities of individuals.

Younger generations, including those dubbed “[digital natives](http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/digitalnatives)” that have grown up with social media as a part of their lives, may approach the sharing of information differently than previous generations. Even as younger generations may be viewed as less concerned about privacy, the rise of [anonymous](http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/anonymity) tools and products like Snapchat, which deletes messages once viewed by participants, could indicate a desire to minimize the digital trail created by applications. [[6](http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/privacy#Notes and Resources)] Across generations, concerns for privacy may dissipate with time as specific technologies take hold or as people become aware of a technology’s benefits and value those over their value for privacy. [[7](http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/privacy#Notes and Resources)]

**Why It Matters**

The less technologically skilled – but also the technologically obsessed – may need to be made aware of the privacy concerns raised by new technologies and may need help in managing their privacy while benefiting from its use

Younger generations may lead a change in society’s value for privacy or they may grow into current values for privacy – especially as they enter higher education and professional careers. [[8](http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/privacy#Notes and Resources)] They may need support in adapting to other generations’ perceptions of privacy. [[9](http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/privacy#Notes and Resources)]

A middle ground may be sought where information sharing is promoted, but with a goal of developing robust online identities, developing community, and advancing personal goals, but while still preserving certain amounts of privacy. [[10](http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/privacy#Notes and Resources)]

Increasing attention is being paid to "shadow profiles" that may be developed and maintained by companies. These profiles, based on community members’ contacts and relationships, could provide detailed information on people who aren’t on a particular social network but who are connected to people who are. [[11](http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/privacy#Notes and Resources)]

**Notes and Resources**

[1] “IFLA Trend Report: Riding the Waves or Caught in the Tide.” International Federation of Library Associations. 2013. Available from <http://trends.ifla.org/>.

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[9] ”Confronting the Myth of the ‘Digital Native.’” Megan O’Neil. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. April 21, 2014. Available from <http://chronicle.com/article/Confronting-the-Myth-of-the/145949/>

[10] ”Confronting the Myth of the ‘Digital Native.’” Megan O’Neil. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. April 21, 2014. Available from <http://chronicle.com/article/Confronting-the-Myth-of-the/145949/>

[11] "Not on a Social Network? You’ve Still Got a Privacy Problem." Robert McMillan. *Wired*. October 6, 2014. Available from<http://www.wired.com/2014/10/privacy-friendster/>