PrimeLife Reference Group Meeting
March 23 - 24, 2009

wp 1.2 Social Network Sites
Ronald Leenes

A research project funded by the European Commission’s 7th Framework Programme
Cisco just offered me a job! Now I have to weigh the utility of a fatty paycheck against the daily commute to San Jose and hating the work.

@theconner Who is the hiring manager.

I’m sure they would love to know that you will hate the work. We here at Cisco are versed in the web.

http://jenrubio.com/post/87611945/cisco-fatty-open-mouth-insert-foot
Social Network Services/Sites

- ICT mediated services
- main features
  - identity ➔ profile page
  - relationship ➔ list of ‘connected users’ (friends)
  - community ➔ view and traverse others’ networks

- social functions
- privacy challenge
  - sociability: data disclosure
  - privacy: data protection
why are teens on SNS?

- identity construction
  - hang out with peers
  - see what is hot and what not
- social phenomena
  - social bonding
  - social inclusion
  - “if you’re not on Myspace, you don’t exist”
  - social pressure
    - “I created an account, because otherwise my friends would have done it for me”
- social capital
people use [Facebook] because it lets them share personal data

James Grimmelmann
privacy issues

- individual level
  - data disclosure concerning others
    - photos/comments containing others
  - lack of control

- platform level
  - profiling by platform providers

- world
  - snooping: parents, teachers, bosses, government
  - lock-in and non portability of identities
Legal issue

- Is profile owner data controller?
  - Yes, unless art 3(2)
  - DPD applies
  - (Purely personal or household use)

- Consequences
  - Yes: DPD provisions apply
  - No: No restrictions

- What about public vs. semi-public profiles?
legal issue

- public profile
  - DPD applies (Lindqvist case ECJ 6-11-2003 C-101/01, OJ 2004 C7/3)

- semi-public profile
  - Dutch court (unpublished):
    - anyone can join group, hence no personal/household use → DPD applies

- what if proper audience segregation (social contexts) and proper access control?
THE social issue

- SNS lack audience segregation
  - friends, friends of friends, rest of the world
  - what about family, colleagues, ‘football mates’, …
- hence
  - schoolyard conversions overheard by everyone:
    - other SNS users
    - platform providers
    - rest of the world
The UK government is considering the mass surveillance and retention of all user communications on social-networking sites including Facebook, MySpace, and Bebo.
# SNS issues decomposed

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identity & relationship

- social convergence
  - roles are context and audience specific. SNS flatten number and types of roles

- sociability paradox
  - private profiles enable user control, but make it hard for (new) friends to find you

- false sense of security
  - users confuse Gesellschafts for Gemeinschafts

- eagerness to connect
  - social inclusion is important, so users accept invitations
identity & relationship

- unauthorised access
  - parents, teachers, bosses are not the intended audience, yet they listen in
- user as data controller
  - it is you on the photo I posted on my profile (without asking you for permission)
- instability of social norms
  - I consider this private information, what do you think?
- surveillance
  - users may adapt their behaviour over time as they learn they are being watched
identity & relationship

- simplistic relationship model
  - friends, what about family, colleagues …
- denigration
  - cyberbullying (see Megan Meier case)
- living on the edge
  - teens know no fear (until they’re 25)
- permeability
  - data can be harvested and used elsewhere
- persistence of identity
  - it is very difficult to terminate a profile
- stalking
platform provider

- panoptic provider
  - provider has access to all data, access and networks

- secondary data use
  - data is used for profiling and targeted advertisement (and being sold)

- permeability
  - data can be harvested and used elsewhere

transparency

- it’s not what it seems
  - my ‘behaviour’ not necessarily relates to me
other (selection)

- profile non-portability
  - lock-in effect due to inability to move profile and network data from one SNS to the next

- advanced monitoring
  - face recognition, EXIF data (pictures), content-based image retrieval, etc allow linking across SNSs

- implicit information leaks
  - meta data, relationship data, etc reveal information about user and network
are these the right issues?