

U.S. Struggle for Control of User Data  
How Opposing Forces use Similar Strategies

An STS Research Paper  
presented to the faculty of the  
School of Engineering and Applied Science  
University of Virginia

by

Samantha Nicholson

May 12, 2023

On my honor as a University student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment as defined by the Honor Guidelines for Thesis-Related Assignments.

*Samantha Nicholson*

STS Advisor: Peter Norton

In the United States as in all countries, vast digital data is collected and tracked by large tech corporations daily. Data is used to influence consumers. “Freemium” apps collect users’ data for later in-app ad targeting. Such practices confirm the validity of the dictum: “If you are not paying for it, you’re not the customer; you’re the product being sold” (Lewis, 2010). Meta (formerly Facebook) collects 79.5 percent of the user data to which it has access (Slynychuk, 2022). Even McAfee, a privacy protection service, admits to storing internet usage data, MAC addresses, emails, and device specifications (McAfee, 2023). In the US, the 1986 Electronic Communications Privacy Act (ECPA) and other legislation offer only minimal privacy protections. Civil libertarians contend that ECPA is outdated (Calabrese, 2010). Large tech corporations have had unlimited access to personal data for decades.

Corporations gather data by tracking user activity, through user surveys, and by buying data from collection agencies (Goswami, 2022). Value of digital data depends on the type of data being sold however a 2022 study shows that an average consumer would be willing to sell their data for \$1,452.25 (CouponBirds, 2022). While consumers put a high value their data, according to Herman (2020), Meta only earns an average of about 10 cents from each like, comment, or other engagement, or about \$10.77 per user each quarter.

In the U.S., privacy advocates and data collectors compete to influence digital data privacy standards. The American Innovation and Choice Online Act (AICOA), a bill presented in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress, would prohibit online platforms from promoting their own products by excluding competitors or by applying their terms of service selectively (S.2992, 2022). California, New York, and Virginia are giving users more control over the amount and type of personal data companies can collect (Bellamy, 2023). To promote stricter regulatory standards,

privacy advocates argue that privacy is a right. The tech industry aims to protect corporate access by expressing how data is necessary for innovation.

## **Review of Research**

Digital privacy evolves as we reach new online achievements. Researchers have stressed the importance of data protection. Contending that internet access is a human right derived from rights of expression and to information, Mathiesen (2014) proposes a “Declaration of Digital Rights” to protect users. A user’s sensitive data is often at jeopardy. Drummond et al. (2015) concluded that because most email services collect data for targeted advertising, patient data is at moderate to high risk. Algorithms using personal data may discriminate against individuals with mental illness (Monteith & Glenn, 2016). User data also can act to steer the public’s opinion. In a study of data in politics, Howard (2005) found that politicians use them to target ads and lobbyists use them as polling data. Online platforms can act as echo chambers, reinforcing likeminded individuals’ opinions using algorithms (Cinelli et al., 2021). When online, individuals often seek opinion reinforcing information (Garrett, 2009).

Online users generate several types of data. Using a software plugin called policyxray, Libert (2018) studied the privacy policies for their third-party data tracking standards. He found that to read a privacy policy through, users need an average of 84.7 minutes, excluding time for locating the policy and for rereading segments of it, and concluded that the typical notice and choice policy fails to reasonably notify consumers of what they are agreeing to (Libert, 2018). Consumers often self-disclose data making it difficult to determine appropriate data collection (Monteith & Glenn, 2016). Privacy-Preserving Data Mining (PPDM) allows for corporate data collection while protecting sensitive information (Mendes & Vilela, 2017). PPDM techniques

are complex, problem dependent, and can degrade the quality of data collectors seek however better protects user specific data. (Mendes & Vilela, 2017)

Techlash, backlash against the tech industry, has surged in the United States (Hemphill, 2019). Privacy advocates and the U.S. government say companies violate user privacy and have monopoly power. Those opposing techlash raise concerns about future internet innovation, claiming it is problematic towards growth (Atkinson et al., 2019). The following research examines current social strategies used by data collectors and privacy advocates to modify policy and influence the American public.

To try and gain support from the public, the tech industry employes astroturfing techniques. Astroturfing has been found to be an effective method of persuading citizens when advance political agendas (Henrie & Gilde, 2019). To inoculate a population against astroturfing comments, Zerback et al. (2021) suggests using issue-specific messages and generating regular astroturfing reports about important political events being targeted. These reports need to include the specific astroturfing strategies being used and distributed to the public and others to educate the population (Zerback et al., 2021).

## **Tech Corporations**

Trade associations protect corporations' access to user data. The Chamber of Progress includes Amazon, Apple, Google, Meta (formerly Facebook) and Twitter. It characterizes itself as “a new center-left tech industry policy coalition promoting technology’s progressive future,” asserting that “voters do not prioritize tech regulation as a public policy issue” (Chamber of Progress, 2022b). TechNet (n.d.), containing many of the same corporations as the Chamber of Progress, claim to be the voice of the innovation economy in the U.S. They support policies that

allow the tech industry to flourish. NetChoice (n.d.), wants to secure the internet through limited government regulation. There are plenty of others, all supported monetarily by the tech industry.

Big Tech uses their assets to lobby the government, trying to sway politics to support their business agenda. Amazon collects personal info from consumers including voice recordings on their Alexa devices (Dastin et al., 2021). In 2017, Amazon used a lobbying firm to except voice recordings, like those collected from Alexa, in the definition of biometric data. Their success allowed for gaps in passed regulation for Amazon to continue collecting recordings (Dastin et al., 2021). Deveau, a TechNet lobbyist, lobbied against the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) in 2018. She and others advocated for a change in the definition of personal information and the removal of a way for users to opt out of data collection (Fang, 2018). Digital privacy regulations are not the only thing corporations lobby against. The tech industry often employs foreign-born software engineers. This caused an expansion in visas for STEM fields becoming an important lobbying issue in 2012. Microsoft spent eight million dollars and filed thirty three reports on immigration at the same time Intel spent \$3.7 million (Fabian & Hesson, 2013). Big Tech has their hands in lobbying more aspects of regulations than the average American likely realizes.

In a technique called astroturfing, some trade associations establish sham grassroots movements that purportedly favor data regulation concealing their business interests. While the Chamber of Progress claims to promote a community of ‘balancing consumer and worker interests’, some call for the reexamination of this trade association. The American Economic Liberties Project opposes monopolistic corporations and its executive director, Sarah Miller, contends that the Chamber of Progress is an astroturfed group “intended to head off policymakers’ effort to break up these companies” (Friedman, 2021). The Tech Oversight

Project (2022), a non-profit advocating for antitrust legislation, ran an ad in 2022 calling out the tech industry for spending millions in creating astroturfing groups including TechNet and Chamber of Progress. American Edge, a group designed to preserve American innovation, was heavily funded during its creation by Facebook and plans to use assets to fund ad campaigns to sway the public and lawmakers (Romm, 2020).

Data breaches put Americans at risk. An estimated two thirds of Americans have experienced some form of data theft (Olmstead & Smith, 2017). Tech corporations who experience breaches use a mix of monetary compensation and written apologies to try and regain consumer trust. This often does not work. Yahoo's major data breaches in 2013 shared sensitive information of more than 3 billion accounts. Yahoo's former CEO tried to spin a positive on Yahoo's security by saying "while all our measures helped Yahoo successfully defend against the barrage of attacks by both private and state-sponsored hackers, Russian agents intruded on our systems and stole our users' data" (Shepardson, 2017). Equifax's data breach in 2017 affected more than 147 million people. Equifax ensures that there is "no evidence that the data obtained during the 2017 cyber attack... has been sold or used" (O'Brien, 2022). Equifax's CEO, Richard Smith, apologized for their lack of transparency and breach saying "The company failed to prevent sensitive information from falling into the hands of wrongdoers" (CBS, 2017). Despite this, the Federal Trade Commission FAQ page advises Americans who don't want Equifax to have their data, how to review and freeze their credit as Americans currently cannot opt out of Equifax's data collection (Federal Trade Commission, 2022). This indicates a remaining lack of consumer trust towards Equifax. Amazon experienced a data breach in 2018 where email addresses were disclosed as a "technical error". Amazon released an email notifying consumers recommending "There is no need for you to change your password" causing panic

and confusion to many recipients (Green, 2018). This had the adverse reaction Amazon was going for.

## **Privacy Advocates**

Privacy advocates seek to restrict corporate data access. Fight for the Future led the 2012 Internet Blackout to protest the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) and the Protect IP Act (PIPA) (Sheehan, 2017). These bills were backed by Hollywood with the goal of censoring websites under accusations of copyright infringement. Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) is a nonprofit advocating for online civil liberties. EFF uses litigation to protect data privacy. Through its “Cover Your Tracks” website, users can access their ‘digital fingerprint’ and learn how to secure their data (EFF, n.d. b). American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), an advocacy, publicizes data collection practices and means of limiting them. It warns that the U.S. has no national privacy policy, and corporations use legal jargon to ensure company access to use consumer data (Stanley, 2019).

Advocacies use provocative statements to persuade citizens to protect their data. The EFF’s Action Center features a variety of campaigns urging people to “Take Action”. By inputting an address, EFF automatically provides users with their legislative representatives’ information and an option to send prewritten messages (EFF Action Center, n.d.). This removes a barrier from users and allows for easier support of EFF’s agenda. The ACLU implements a similar method on the RESTRICT Act. This act would ban TikTok and other software that “may” transfer data to a Chinese entity (Anders & Leventoff, 2023). By relating to users’ thoughts with statements like “we have a right to use TikTok and other platforms to exchange our thoughts, ideas, and opinions” ACLU implies that they a part of the fight including the

average American. Using bold font to highlight things like “Tell your members of Congress to fight against censorship” solidifies the ACLU’s strong willed statement used to encourage citizens to enter their information to automatically sent a letter to local lawmakers regarding their “NO” vote (ACLU People Power, n.d.). Vorys (1946) noted that members of Congress considered public opinion but had no time to read every letter they received. Though the processes of constituent relations have been transformed since then, the essential problem persists: members of Congress cannot have all the information they need. Decisions are not made on a majority rules scenario so letters must be written with importance.

In order to reach more people, advocacies use and promote activism engagement on the social media platforms they often call for regulation. The EFF has an entire page dedicated to tips and recommendations on how organizations should use social media to promote their work. Most interesting is their point to “try and put a positive spin on posts to make them more easily ‘Liked’” as they try to boost users’ engagement (EFF, n.d. a). The ACLU makes notes that the hashtag #blacklivesmatter has changed the way social movements grow and use “mediated mobilization”, organizing via social media devices (Roberts, 2018). While not strong like other movements, the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) attempts to do a similar thing using hashtags like #FISAREform to encourage others to act to support the end Section 702 of the FISA Act (EFF, 2023).

## **Ongoing Legislation**

### *Federal*

There are several ongoing battles for consumer data currently in the U.S.. The American Innovation and Choice Online Act (AICOA), a bill proposed in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress would



prohibit online platforms from promoting their own products by excluding competitors or by applying their terms of service selectively. The bill would restrict some uses of nonpublic data generated on the platform and grant competitors' access to the data (S.2992, 2022). Senator Dick Durbin, a cosponsor of the bill, said in October 2021, "Choice is fundamental to competition. American consumers have been systematically denied access to critical information about their market choices. This new bill will fight strong arm tactics used by Big Tech to disadvantage their consumers and exclude competitors from the marketplace" (Klobuchar, 2021). Chamber of Progress claims AICOA would prevent social media platforms from removing hate speech (Chamber of Progress, 2022a). Similarly, Amazon released a statement outlining the negative consequences the AICOA would have on their American Consumers and other small businesses. Amazon appeals to the public saying their prime service that "people love and rely on" would see devastating changes due to the bill's vague wording making it difficult logistics to fulfill orders from third parties. Amazon also claims the legislation targets them by requiring a high market value to qualify for regulation (Huseman, 2022). Fight for the Future claims AICOA could impose proper changes that would begin to release us from "Big Tech domination" (Fight for the Future, 2022). The American Innovation and Choice Online Act did not pass last congress and has not yet been introduced into the current session of Congress.

The American Data Privacy and Protection Act (ADPPA) was also introduced in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress. ADPPA aims to limit the collection and use of personal data, establish consumer data protections, and provide protection to user data (H.R.8152, 2022). EFF says that while the bill is a step up, it also overrides existing state laws that provide more protection and has loopholes. They note that the ADPPA is full of exceptions and limits in when individuals have the right to fight back against data misuse (Tsukayama et al., 2022). Edelman (2022) mentions

that the tech industry didn't try to kill the bill, possibly because of its weakness. EPIC indicates that ADPPA allows companies, as long as they disclose the purpose and get consent, to gather unreasonable amounts of private data (EPIC, 2023). Their CEO said the ADPPA has "the best opportunity it has had in decades to stop the very real harms that are happening online every minute of every day" (U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation, 2022). TechNet's VP Carl Holshouser also supported the bill saying "We're more hopeful than we have been in years that a bipartisan privacy bill can make its way to the president's desk this Congress" (U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation, 2022). The American Data Privacy and Protection Act did not pass last congress and has not yet been introduced into the current session of Congress.

Recently, S.686, better known as the RESTRICT Act, was introduced into the Senate. This bill seeks to allow the federal government to 'minimize foreign threats to information and communications technology' (S.686, 2023). The RESTRICT Act caused an uproar on social media. The current vague legislation may allow for a nationwide TikTok ban (Tangalakis-Lippert, 2023). Conspiracies are also floating around the TikTok app insinuating Meta is lobbying for the ban (Buckler, 2023). While this remains unknown, the Washington Post did report that Meta paid Targeted Victory, a republican consulting firm. Targeted Victory promoted concerns against TikTok online, seeking to market it as dangerous towards lawmakers and parents (Lorenz & Harwell, 2022). The RESTRICT act could also accidentally make VPN services illegal to use (Tangalakis-Lippert, 2023). The ACLU and the EFF oppose the bill. EFF notes that Congress should focus on data privacy legislation involving social media companies "Foreign adversaries won't be able to get our data from social media companies if the social media companies aren't allowed to collect, retain, and sell it in the first place" (Kelley & Greene,

2023). Despite others concerns, the White House National Security Advisor, Jake Sullivan, urges Congress to act quickly in passing the bill in the interest of protecting American data (Sullivan, 2023).

### *California*

California approved AB 2273 – the California Age Appropriate Design Code Act (AADCA) in August of 2022. This bill requires online providers who provide any services that are accessible to children to document and mitigate potential risks their service could impose on children (Bruno et al., 2022). They also must have high default privacy settings, privacy policies legible to children, among other requirements (Bruno et al., 2022). Lynch (2022) speculates that due to research proving Instagram’s harmful algorithm impacts teenager body image issues, that there would be a necessity for an over-18 and under-18 version of the algorithm. Despite aiming to protect children, the California Age Appropriate Design Code Act may actually violate federal law. NetChoice is currently federally suing California for AADCA saying it “steamrolls the First Amendment”. They argue it limits adults access to free speech by restricting providers to manage users protected speech and restricts tech innovation (Chavez, 2022). California’s Governor Gavin Newsom released a statement in support of upholding the bill saying “No other state is doing more than California to protect kids – shielding them from harmful data mining, violent content, and automatic GPS tracking that allows adults to track down kids” (Symon, 2023). The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), urged Governor Newsom to veto the bill for similar reasons NetChoice is suing now. EFF believes AADCA could violate the First Amendment as it uses vague language to consider “the best interest of children” (Tsukayama, 2022).

## **Conclusion**

The fight for consumer data is far from over. With technology regularly breaking boundaries, it is important to realize that Congress and the American public will always be subject to persuasion from both sides of this argument. With money and resources, big technology companies will sink their assets into protecting their right to collect consumer data to further optimize technology. They will continue pursuing the limitation and removal of regulations of what is considered personal data. Activists will maintain the argument that as Americans, we have intrinsic rights to personal privacy, including our digital data. As technology evolves, American data is likely to remain at jeopardy of misuse. Companies will continue to buy and sell data without widespread consumer knowledge. Data breaches will likely put more Americans at jeopardy of fraud and identity theft. Proposing and passing new legislation could provide extensive data protection but requires lawmaker's support. Privacy advocates and the tech industry both insist new regulation must not violate the first amendment.

Further work could be done to determine how effective privacy advocates and tech corporations are in swaying the American public. Statistics could be gathered on how ad campaigns change public perception of companies. Work could also be done to research how individual Americans can influence the battle for their private data. This could include ways to properly secure smart devices, securing online accounts, and limiting the amount of private data users willingly provide. As people's lives integrate with new technology, American feedback will be an influential factor in how private data gets regulated.

## References

- ACLU People Power. (n.d.). Tell Congress: Don't Ban TikTok! [peoplepower.org/letter/tiktok-ban?initms\\_aff=nat&initms\\_chan=soc&utm\\_medium=soc&initms=230227\\_action\\_ig&utm\\_source=ig&utm\\_campaign=&utm\\_content=230227\\_privacytechnology\\_action&ms\\_aff=nat&ms\\_chan=soc&ms=230227\\_action\\_ig#](https://peoplepower.org/letter/tiktok-ban?initms_aff=nat&initms_chan=soc&utm_medium=soc&initms=230227_action_ig&utm_source=ig&utm_campaign=&utm_content=230227_privacytechnology_action&ms_aff=nat&ms_chan=soc&ms=230227_action_ig#)
- Anders, C., & Leventoff, J. (2023, Feb. 27). Oppose Censorship and Protect Free Speech by Voting “NO” on HR 1153. ACLU. [aclu.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ACLU-Letter-of-Opposition-to-HR-1153.pdf](https://aclu.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ACLU-Letter-of-Opposition-to-HR-1153.pdf)
- Atkinson, R. D., Brake, D., Castro, D., Cunliff, C., Kennedy, J., McLaughlin, M., McQuinn, A., & New, J. (2019, Oct.). A Policymaker’s Guide to the “Techlash”—What It Is and Why It’s a Threat to Growth and Progress. Information Technology and Innovation Foundation. [itif.org/publications/2019/10/28/policymakers-guide-techlash/](https://itif.org/publications/2019/10/28/policymakers-guide-techlash/)
- Bellamy, F. D. (2023, Jan. 12). U.S. data privacy laws to enter new era in 2023. Reuters. [reuters.com/legal/legalindustry/us-data-privacy-laws-enter-new-era-2023-2023-01-12/](https://reuters.com/legal/legalindustry/us-data-privacy-laws-enter-new-era-2023-2023-01-12/)
- Bruno, S. L., Bhargava, M. N., & Cobb, S. D. (2022, Sept. 13). California legislature approves strict online privacy rules for children. ReedSmith. [reedsmith.com/en/perspectives/2022/09/california-legislature-approves-strict-online-privacy-rules-for-children](https://reedsmith.com/en/perspectives/2022/09/california-legislature-approves-strict-online-privacy-rules-for-children)
- Buckler, N. (2023, March 22). Wild Conspiracy Theories Claim That The Push To Ban TikTok Is Being Funded By The Zucc. The Chainsaw. [thechainsaw.com/business/tiktok-ban-mark-zuckerberg-social-media/](https://thechainsaw.com/business/tiktok-ban-mark-zuckerberg-social-media/)
- Calabrese, C. (2010, March 30). Electronic Privacy Law is Older Than the World Wide Web—It’s Time for An Upgrade | News & Commentary. American Civil Liberties Union. [aclu.org/news/national-security/electronic-privacy-law-older-world-wide-web-its-time-upgrade](https://aclu.org/news/national-security/electronic-privacy-law-older-world-wide-web-its-time-upgrade)
- CBS. (2017, Oct. 2). Ex-Equifax CEO Richard Smith "deeply sorry" for data breach. CBS Interactive. [cbsnews.com/news/equifax-data-breach-richard-smith-deeply-sorry/](https://cbsnews.com/news/equifax-data-breach-richard-smith-deeply-sorry/)
- Chamber of Progress. (2022a, Aug. 26). Why Are Some Democrats Standing with Senator Ted Cruz in Support of the American Innovation and Choice Online Act and Open App Markets Act?. [progresschamber.org/why-are-some-democrats-standing-with-ted-cruz-in-support-of-aicoa-and-oama%ef%bf%bc](https://progresschamber.org/why-are-some-democrats-standing-with-ted-cruz-in-support-of-aicoa-and-oama%ef%bf%bc)
- Chamber of Progress. (2022b, June 16). How voters think about antitrust policy. [progresschamber.org/what-voters-think-antitrust-policy/#/m/NY](https://progresschamber.org/what-voters-think-antitrust-policy/#/m/NY)

- Chavez, K. (2022, Dec. 14). NetChoice Sues California to Protect Families & Free Speech Online. NetChoice. [netchoice.org/netchoice-sues-california-to-protect-families-free-speech-online/](https://netchoice.org/netchoice-sues-california-to-protect-families-free-speech-online/)
- Cinelli, M., De Francisci Morales, G., Galeazzi, A., Quattrociocchi, W., & Starnini, M. (2021, Feb.). The Echo Chamber Effect on social media. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 118(9). [doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2023301118](https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2023301118), Google Scholar
- CouponBirds. (2022, July). How Much Are Shoppers Willing to Sell Their Personal Data? [couponbirds.com/research-center/data/how-much-are-shoppers-willing-to-sell-their-personal-data](https://couponbirds.com/research-center/data/how-much-are-shoppers-willing-to-sell-their-personal-data)
- Dastin, J., Kirkham, C., & Kalra, A. (2021, Nov. 19). Amazon wages a secret war on Americans' privacy, documents shows. Reuters. [reuters.com/investigates/special-report/amazon-privacy-lobbying/](https://reuters.com/investigates/special-report/amazon-privacy-lobbying/)
- Drummond, A., Cromarty, P., & Battersby, M. (2015). Privacy in the digital age: Implications for clinical practice. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 22(3), 227–237. [doi.org/10.1111/cpsp.12105](https://doi.org/10.1111/cpsp.12105), EBSCOhost
- Edelman, G. (2022, July 21). Don't Look Now, but Congress Might Pass an Actually Good Privacy Bill. WIRED. [wired.com/story/american-data-privacy-protection-act-adppa/](https://wired.com/story/american-data-privacy-protection-act-adppa/)
- EFF (n.d. a). Electronic Frontier Foundation. Engaging Social Media for Advocacy. Electronic Frontier Foundation. [eff.org/electronic-frontier-alliance/social-media-tips](https://eff.org/electronic-frontier-alliance/social-media-tips)
- EFF (n.d. b). Electronic Frontier Foundation. How do Trackers Work? Cover Your Tracks. [coveryourtracks.eff.org/learn](https://coveryourtracks.eff.org/learn)
- EFF (2023, March 11). Electronic Frontier Foundation. Section 702 has become something Congress never authorized: a domestic spying tool (tweet). [twitter.com/EFF/status/1634622968549765120?s=20](https://twitter.com/EFF/status/1634622968549765120?s=20)
- EFF Action Center (n.d.). Electronic Frontier Foundation. Tell the Senate: The solution to kids' privacy isn't more surveillance. [act.eff.org/action/tell-the-senate-the-solution-to-kids-privacy-isn-t-more-surveillance](https://act.eff.org/action/tell-the-senate-the-solution-to-kids-privacy-isn-t-more-surveillance)
- EPIC. (2023, Feb. 27). Epic Statement re: Data Privacy Act of 2023. [epic.org/documents/epic-statement-re-data-privacy-act-of-2023/](https://epic.org/documents/epic-statement-re-data-privacy-act-of-2023/)
- Fabian, J., & Hesson, T. (2013, Feb. 19). Tech Sector Leads the Lobbying Charge for Immigration Reform. ABC News. [abcnews.go.com/ABC\\_Univision/Politics/tech-sector-leads-lobbying-charge-immigration-reform/story?id=18536796](https://abcnews.go.com/ABC_Univision/Politics/tech-sector-leads-lobbying-charge-immigration-reform/story?id=18536796)

- Fang, L. (2018, June 26). Google and Facebook are quietly fighting California's privacy rights initiative, emails reveal. *The Intercept*. [theintercept.com/2018/06/26/google-and-facebook-are-quietly-fighting-californias-privacy-rights-initiative-emails-reveal/](https://theintercept.com/2018/06/26/google-and-facebook-are-quietly-fighting-californias-privacy-rights-initiative-emails-reveal/)
- Federal Trade Commission. (2022, Dec.). Equifax Data Breach Settlement. [ftc.gov/enforcement/refunds/equifax-data-breach-settlement#FAQ7](https://ftc.gov/enforcement/refunds/equifax-data-breach-settlement#FAQ7)
- Fight for the Future. (2022, June 7). Why we're dropping everything to go all in on antitrust. [fightforthefuture.org/news/2022-06-07-all-in-on-antitrust](https://fightforthefuture.org/news/2022-06-07-all-in-on-antitrust)
- Friedman, D. (2021, April 9). An ex-Google lobbyist who backed Jim Jordan is leading Big Tech's bid to court the left. *Mother Jones*. [www.motherjones.com/politics/2021/04/chamber-of-progress-google-facebook-amazon-twitter/](https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2021/04/chamber-of-progress-google-facebook-amazon-twitter/)
- Garrett, R. K. (2009, Jan.). Echo Chambers Online?: Politically motivated selective exposure among Internet news users. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 14(2), 265–285. [doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2009.01440.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2009.01440.x), Oxford Academic
- Green, D. (2018, Nov. 21). Amazon is getting slammed for a confusing email telling customers they don't need to change their password after a data leak. *Business Insider*. [businessinsider.com/amazon-customers-names-email-address-exposed-2018-11](https://businessinsider.com/amazon-customers-names-email-address-exposed-2018-11)
- Goswami, S. (2022, Fe. 16). What Does Big Tech Actually Do With Your Data?. *Forbes*. [forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2022/02/16/what-does-big-tech-actually-do-with-your-data/?sh=52e8341f515f](https://forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2022/02/16/what-does-big-tech-actually-do-with-your-data/?sh=52e8341f515f)
- Hemphill, T. A. (2019). 'Techlash', responsible innovation, and the self-regulatory organization. *Journal of Responsible Innovation*, 6(2), 240–247. [doi.org/10.1080/23299460.2019.1602817](https://doi.org/10.1080/23299460.2019.1602817), Taylor & Francis Online
- Henrie, K., & Gilde, C. (2019). An Examination of the Impact of Astroturfing on Nationalism: A Persuasion Knowledge Perspective. *Social Sciences*, 8(2). [doi.org/10.3390/socsci8020038](https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci8020038), MDPI
- Herman, S. (2020, Oct. 30). Should Tech Companies Be Paying Us For Our Data?. *Forbes*. [forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2020/10/30/should-tech-companies-be-paying-us-for-our-data/?sh=43ea665d4147](https://forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2020/10/30/should-tech-companies-be-paying-us-for-our-data/?sh=43ea665d4147)
- Howard, P. (2005). Deep Democracy, Thin Citizenship: The Impact of Digital Media in Political Campaign Strategy. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 597, 153–170., JSTOR
- H.R.8152 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): American Data Privacy and Protection Act. (2022, December 30). [congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/8152/all-info](https://congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/8152/all-info)

- Huseman, B. (2022, June 1). Antitrust legislation and the unintended negative consequences for American consumers and small businesses. Amazon. [aboutamazon.com/news/policy-news-views/antitrust-legislation-and-the-unintended-negative-consequences-for-american-consumers-and-small-businesses](https://aboutamazon.com/news/policy-news-views/antitrust-legislation-and-the-unintended-negative-consequences-for-american-consumers-and-small-businesses)
- Kelley, J., & Greene, D. (2023, April 4). The Broad, Vague RESTRICT Act Is a Dangerous Substitute for Comprehensive Data Privacy Legislation. Electronic Frontier Foundation. [eff.org/deeplinks/2023/04/broad-vague-restrict-act-dangerous-substitute-comprehensive-data-privacy](https://eff.org/deeplinks/2023/04/broad-vague-restrict-act-dangerous-substitute-comprehensive-data-privacy)
- Klobuchar, A. (2021, Oct. 14). Klobuchar, Grassley, Colleagues to Introduce Bipartisan Legislation to Rein in Big Tech. U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar (press release). [www.klobuchar.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2021/10/klobuchar-grassley-colleagues-to-introduce-bipartisan-legislation-to-rein-in-big-tech](https://www.klobuchar.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2021/10/klobuchar-grassley-colleagues-to-introduce-bipartisan-legislation-to-rein-in-big-tech)
- Lewis, A. (2010, Aug.). Reader comment on Jordan M. Rhaomi (2010, Aug. 26), User-Driven Discontent. MetaFilter.
- Libert, T. (2018). An Automated Approach to Auditing Disclosure of Third-Party Data Collection in Website Privacy Policies. *Proceedings of the 2018 World Wide Web Conference*, 207–216. [doi.org/10.1145/3178876.3186087](https://doi.org/10.1145/3178876.3186087)
- Lorenz, T., & Harwell, D. (2022, March 30). Facebook paid GOP firm to malign TikTok. The Washington Post. [washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/03/30/facebook-tiktok-targeted-victory/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/03/30/facebook-tiktok-targeted-victory/)
- Lynch, S. (2022, Oct. 25). A New Law Designed for Children’s Internet Safety Will Change the Web for Adults, Too. Stanford University Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence. [hai.stanford.edu/news/new-law-designed-childrens-internet-safety-will-change-web-adults-too](https://hai.stanford.edu/news/new-law-designed-childrens-internet-safety-will-change-web-adults-too)
- Mathiesen, K. (2014, Jan.). Human Rights for the Digital Age. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 29(1), 2–18. [doi.org/10.1080/08900523.2014.863124](https://doi.org/10.1080/08900523.2014.863124), Taylor & Francis Online
- McAfee. (2023, Jan. 1). Privacy & Legal Terms. [mcafee.com/en-in/consumer-support/policy/legal.html#:~:text=In%20order%20to%20provide%20you,and%20URLs%20and%20traffic%20data.](https://mcafee.com/en-in/consumer-support/policy/legal.html#:~:text=In%20order%20to%20provide%20you,and%20URLs%20and%20traffic%20data.)
- Mendes, R., & Vilela, J. P. (2017). Privacy-Preserving Data Mining: Methods, Metrics, and Applications. *IEEE Access*, 5, 10562–10582. [doi.org/10.1109/access.2017.2706947](https://doi.org/10.1109/access.2017.2706947), IEEE Xplore
- Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Astroturfing Definition & Meaning. [merriam-webster.com/dictionary/astroturfing](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/astroturfing)



- Monteith, S., & Glenn, T. (2016, Oct.). Automated decision-making and Big Data: Concerns for People With Mental Illness. *Current Psychiatry Reports*, 18. doi.org/10.1007/s11920-016-0746-6, Springer Link
- NetChoice. (n.d.). Our Mission. [netchoice.org/about/#our-mission](https://netchoice.org/about/#our-mission)
- O'Brien, S. (2022, Dec. 28). Consumers are getting payments from Equifax data breach settlement. Here's what to expect if you filed a claim. CNBC. [cnbc.com/2022/12/28/payments-from-equifax-settlement-over-2017-data-breach-are-going-out.html](https://www.cnbc.com/2022/12/28/payments-from-equifax-settlement-over-2017-data-breach-are-going-out.html)
- Olmstead, K., & Smith, A. (2017, Jan. 26). Americans' experiences with Data Security. Pew Research Center. [pewresearch.org/internet/2017/01/26/1-americans-experiences-with-data-security/](https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2017/01/26/1-americans-experiences-with-data-security/)
- Roberts, F. L. (2018, July 13). How Black Lives Matter Changed the Way Americans Fight for Freedom. American Civil Liberties Union. [aclu.org/news/racial-justice/how-black-lives-matter-changed-way-americans-fight](https://www.aclu.org/news/racial-justice/how-black-lives-matter-changed-way-americans-fight)
- Romm, T. (2020, May 12). Facebook is quietly helping to set up a new pro-tech advocacy group to battle Washington. The Washington Post. [washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/05/12/facebook-lobbying-american-edge/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/05/12/facebook-lobbying-american-edge/)
- S.2992— 117<sup>th</sup> Congress (2021-2022): American Innovation and Choice Online Act. (2022, March 2). [www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/2992](https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/2992)
- S.686 - 118th Congress (2023-2024): RESTRICT Act. (2023, March 7). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/686>
- Sheehan, K. M. (2017, Jan. 18). Five Years Ago, Internet Users Showed Their Political Might. And They Will Do It Again. *Slate*. [slate.com/technology/2017/01/the-fifth-anniversary-of-the-sopa-pipa-protest-internet-blackout.html](https://www.slate.com/technology/2017/01/the-fifth-anniversary-of-the-sopa-pipa-protest-internet-blackout.html)
- Shepardson, D. (2017, Nov. 8). Former Yahoo CEO apologizes for data breaches, blames Russians. Reuters. [reuters.com/article/us-usa-databreaches/former-yahoo-ceo-apologizes-for-data-breaches-blames-russians-idUSKBN1D825V](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-databreaches/former-yahoo-ceo-apologizes-for-data-breaches-blames-russians-idUSKBN1D825V)
- Slynychuk, A. (2022, Nov. 29). Big Brother Brands Report: Which Companies Access Our Personal Data the Most?. Clario. [clario.co/blog/which-company-uses-most-data/](https://www.clario.co/blog/which-company-uses-most-data/)
- Stanley, J. (2019, Nov. 14). Three Common Privacy Misconceptions That Companies Love. *American Civil Liberties Union*. [aclu.org/news/privacy-technology/three-common-privacy-misconceptions-that-companies-love](https://www.aclu.org/news/privacy-technology/three-common-privacy-misconceptions-that-companies-love)
- Sullivan, J. (2023, March 7). Statement from National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan on the Introduction of the RESTRICT Act. The White House. [whitehouse.gov/briefing-](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-)

room/statements-releases/2023/03/07/statement-from-national-security-advisor-jake-sullivan-on-the-introduction-of-the-restrict-act/#:~:text=March%2007%2C%202023-,Statement%20from%20National%20Security%20Advisor%20Jake%20Sullivan,Introduc tion%20of%20the%20RESTRICT%20Act&text=We%20applaud%20the%20biparti san%20group,Communications%20Technology%20(RESTRICT)%20Act.

Symon, E. (2023, Feb. 22). Governor Newsom Condemns Lawsuit Against AB 2273 Online Law. California Globe. [californiaglobe.com/articles/governor-newsom-condemns-lawsuit-against-ab-2273-online-law/](https://californiaglobe.com/articles/governor-newsom-condemns-lawsuit-against-ab-2273-online-law/)

Tangalakis-Lippert, K. (2023, April 23). RESTRICT Act explained: proposed TikTok ban is “a PATRIOT Act for the digital age,” some lawmakers say. Business Insider. [businessinsider.com/what-is-restrict-act-explained-tiktok-ban-summary-2023-4#:~:text=The%20RESTRICT%20Act%20explained&text=Instead%2C%20it%20wo uld%20authorize%20the,Korea%2C%20Russia%2C%20and%20Venezuela.](https://businessinsider.com/what-is-restrict-act-explained-tiktok-ban-summary-2023-4#:~:text=The%20RESTRICT%20Act%20explained&text=Instead%2C%20it%20wo uld%20authorize%20the,Korea%2C%20Russia%2C%20and%20Venezuela.)

Tech Oversight Project. (2022, May 31). The Tech Oversight Project Launches TV Ad Slamming Big Tech for Long History of Concealing Truth, Lying to Congress. [techoversight.org/2022/05/31/the-tech-oversight-project-launches-tv-ad-slamming-big-tech-for-long-history-of-concealing-truth-lying-to-congress/](https://techoversight.org/2022/05/31/the-tech-oversight-project-launches-tv-ad-slamming-big-tech-for-long-history-of-concealing-truth-lying-to-congress/)

TechNet. (n.d.). Our story. [technet.org/our-story/](https://technet.org/our-story/)

Tsukayama, H. (2022, Sept. 14). AB 2273 VETO letter. Electronic Frontier Foundation. [eff.org/document/ab-2273-veto-letter](https://eff.org/document/ab-2273-veto-letter)

Tsukayama, H., Schwartz, A., McKinney, I., & Tien, L. (2022, July 24). *Americans Deserve More Than The Current American Data Privacy Protection Act*. Electronic Frontier Foundation. [eff.org/deeplinks/2022/07/americans-deserve-more-current-american-data-privacy-protection-act](https://eff.org/deeplinks/2022/07/americans-deserve-more-current-american-data-privacy-protection-act)

U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation. (2022, June 15). *What they are saying: American Data Privacy and Protection Act*. Retrieved from <https://www.commerce.senate.gov/2022/6/what-they-are-saying-american-data-privacy-and-protection-act>

Vorys, J. M. (1946). How a member of Congress measures the response of his constituents. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 32(2), 170–172. doi.org/10.1080/00335634609381182, EBSCOhost

Zerback, T., Töpfl, F., & Knöpfle, M. (2021). The disconcerting potential of online disinformation: Persuasive effects of astroturfing comments and three strategies for inoculation against them. *New Media & Society*, 23(5), 1080–1098. doi.org/10.1177/1461444820908530, Sage Journals