

Are We Heading Into a Global Surveillance Superstate and Why?

Technological totalitarianism is on the rise throughout the world, a free fall into dystopia accurately predicted by many experts. Sabotage is solidarity where telling the truth is treason.

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Within rapidly advancing tech sectors of capitalist economies an invisible interface between internet infrastructure, the state and the military-industrial complex has been developed, with decidedly negative and oppressive outcomes. Silicon Valley in the US is the global epicentre of this big data cartel and its practices are highly dubious, decidedly unethical.

Tech corporations are vastly powerful, calculatedly secretive and chronically manipulative entities, often operating with near total impunity, immune to the moderating force of law and outside of the "social contract." That is to say they are not motivated by loyalty to the web of basic civic obligations – the "social contract" – that unite everyone and everything in civic society. The fact that Facebook was allowed to establish the "publisher" defence whilst Wikileaks weren't is an absolute joke.

Through an immense technological arsenal and a pathological need for control, states and corporations covertly modulate both individual and national psyches through targeted messaging and perception management. The effects are nearly always negative and ultimately an attempt to create a more successful environment for their narrow agendas.

In particular, in perhaps a paradigmatic example of the evils of surveillance capitalism, the Cambridge Analytica scandal revealed the extent of influence of monetised digital monitoring. Barons of big data consultancies, such as Cambridge Analytica, are enlisted by charlatan politicians hoping to sway elections and public opinion in their favour. The engine for this process is immorally applied behavioural management technologies thriving as a result of deregulation.

In a way a microcosm of a broader culture of data exploitation common amongst political kingmakers, Cambridge Analytica, purposefully and in full knowledge of the deleterious effects on democracy mapped the entire range of personalities and psychological profiles of individual citizens, without knowledge or consent and themselves developing the code and algorithms to do this. This gave them the keys to data mining on social media, with completely malicious intent, bastardising psychological and behavioural research and corrupting the course of democracy, their reason d'être.

Techno-feudal systems, of which Cambridge Analytica was a drop in the ocean, chew up competent and capable citizens like numbers in the matrix. They reconstitute our minds by managing the information our minds receive, spitting us out as passive obedient consumers, of both commodities and political fiction.

Without doubt, there is some truth to the idea that a backlash against the hyper development of digital technologies and systems is an expression of a reactionary, reflexive tendency to neo-Luddite thinking still residual in our culture, but there are other reasons to be suspicious of the data economy and many of them make sense.

Ultimately, what we are seeing with the future direction of the digital world is the fusion of digital technologies with authoritarian regimes and their militaries. This is helping establish a global surveillance superstate with the capacity to completely control what we consider real and true.

The hope of the early internet was to use it to establish a positive dynamic to advance the people's collective demand for freedom, as well as allowing us to cultivate deeper understandings of things and in so doing emancipate us. Particularly because positive momentum online was gathering steam and scattering seeds of liberation, colossal efforts were made on the part of the state and corporations to push this tendency to obscurity through censorship and lawfare. This expanded their monopoly and management over the online environment. The internet, at once appealing to the best of human nature, at the same time unleashed its worst traits, transforming yielding it to a ruthless economy and commodifying data.

Techno-feudalism and intolerance toward free thinking has also precipitated a journalism emergency. Well meaning journalists and innovators are being prosecuted and punitively treated as if they're a fifth column, most noticeably with the extradition case against Julian Assange, a saga still in motion.

In all truth his actions honoured the public right to know and exhibited fidelity to the first amendment, reporting war crimes suppressed in trad media. Wikileaks is also a feat of systems engineering intended to serve democracy, much unlike the cartoon villain cyber-terrorist operation it is according to Washington.

The penalisation of journalism is happening under the aegis of obsolescent draconian espionage laws weaponised against dissidents. The need for lovers of free thinking to organise and fight this barbaric war on truth is obvious, timely and urgent. And yet the arbiters of "correct" opinion and stenographers of empire have hood winked most of us either into forgetting him, or seeing him as a rapist, rather than an asylum seeker legitimately fleeing political persecution.

Ultimately, the fundamental problem with the current political economy of data is that it

produces asymmetries and disparities of power by coercive and invasive methods. Between corporations, citizens and civic societies, power is dramatically slanted in favour of, you guessed it, governments and corporations. Silicon Valley's behemoths, especially Google, have gained immense power, largely by monitoring and managing online traffic to go in a direction expedient to them, as well as access to and ownership of vast archives of private information.

Within this matrix sabotage is solidarity, particularly where truth is treason.

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