

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE OPEN INTERNET

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The internet was built on the principle of openness. Information shared, source codes made available for all to iterate and riff on.

The internet's beginning was a noble one.

But like any best intentions, there's invariably a corresponding down-beat. Open source can all too easily be 'open-to-exploitation' – because laissez-faire brings out the best and worst in human nature.

Too much disclosure; too much information made available, or too easily accessible and in the wrong hands: the dangers to us all are staggeringly clear and present.

Data theft, identity fraud, hacks and cyber 'heists', the threat to our professional and private lives, is very real.

Every time we go online, every time we interact online, we scatter more digital breadcrumbs: information about ourselves, our interests, our family, what we're doing, where we are, what we like. Would you like to tag this photo? Would you like to check-in? Do you accept these cookies? And of course, we mentally and literally click 'Accept'. Because otherwise it's 'Access Denied'. So we let the cookies collect our information, telling the site owners (and the owners of other sites) more and more about us.

Big Data is simply the data we're all making, all the time, our digital lives being aggregated and correlated.

Tech giants like Google, Facebook and Twitter say as little as possible publicly about Big Data – and their silence speaks volumes. They're too busy joining the dots, building the behavioural pictures and developing ever-smarter predictive algorithms.

Car manufacturers like Porsche refuse to carry Android Auto. Why? Data disclosure. In entering into any agreement with Google to use Android, auto manufacturers must collect and share their car's (meaning their drivers) full onboard diagnostic and GPS data portraits. Google wants to know how we drive, our speeds, throttle positions, engine revs and destinations.

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Perhaps this ongoing 'sharing' is an acceptable side of the Internet's open source origins? So long as Google keep reminding themselves not to be evil, we're all good?

Maybe it's not fair to suggest the open internet is one big surveillance camera - but the internet could fairly be termed a very open sea, where not everything lurking in the depths is friendly. We press 'Send', but where does it go before reaching the intended Inbox? And perhaps more importantly, where could it go if purposefully intercepted?

The answer is not to be paranoid about our data and identities. But nor is the answer to blindly accept 'the way things are', hope for the best, and go swimming. The answer is to take control. To navigate the open internet in the right kind of digital raft; to use the internet on our own terms. Where we're protected, where our data is our own and not by default everyone else's, where we can stay private using platforms that protect us and afford 'privacy by design'.

The Digital Age is evolving. The internet and how we use it is adapting. More than necessary, a more personalised, proactive and pre-emptive approach to online behaviour is crucial. It is crucial for companies to operate with confidence and confidentiality. It is crucial for children to communicate safely online, and for parents to know their children are safe. It is crucial for us all to live and communicate off and online with peace-ofmind. From open-everything, we're moving into an age of online empowerment. To pro-active individualism. To privacy by design. And this is a good thing.

Stay Private is state-of-the-art technology platform and suite of digital products built to safeguard our everyday digital lives – to keep us all safer and to ensure that we only share what we want to share.

Stay Private is the internet on your terms. Which we think is about time.

Yours faithfully,

 **STAY PRIVATE**

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