

We The People
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We the People 359 The Digital Gulag



Good Day to you. This is the digital age and that may sound fine and in many ways it is. However this new revolutionary method of data exchange and information sharing comes at a very high price. We know that those with a desire to control are drawn to abusing this technology just as a magnet is attracted to iron. This desire is innate in humans and is ultimately the cause of a loss of freedom and wars and the abandonment of morals and ethics. Central control is at the heart of authoritarian government and always leads to a dramatic loss of freedom and justice. Because digital transmission messages travel at the speed of light, information can be transferred and used in the blink of an eye. This is a long way from sending messages by Morse code or carrier pigeon. It's amazing technology being used for good but for nefarious activity as well with the latter rising daily as the crooks and the corrupt learn to harness the power of the digital world.

No doubt you've heard of the home and office voice assistant devices like Amazon's Alexa and Apple's Siri. We now know that Amazon and Apple listen in using special algorithms waiting for key words and phrases plus the disturbing news they use humans to listen as well. These devices simply sit in your home or office and you call them by name and ask a question. They also eaves-drop which is morally reprehensible. Facebook uses people to listen to recordings gathered via its message app which they claim requires the users approval but it turns out Facebook were not telling the truth. NSW is installing special hidden cameras to identify people using mobile phones while driving and automatically book them. You might say that's fine but it's an extrapolation of the rapid loss of privacy traded off under the guise of road safety which may simply sanitise revenue generation. Remember, we already have radar and red light cameras which monitor our every driving moment. It's also debatable as to whether these intrusive devices actually do prevent collisions or save lives to the magnitude claimed. The head of Amazon's Alexa has stated they are developing software to *determine your mood* and apparently without your knowledge. Once determined it could lead to special ads being sent your way or even prescriptions suggested to alter your mood and all sponsored of course. There are many examples prevalent today and just imagine when your insurance company can interrogate your personal life before insuring you or your home and I have no doubt that's happening now. The big problem is that we the people are mainly unaware of all this intrusion and spying and how it affects our lives. It's big evil brother indeed and if you have a mobile phone you are being tracked daily.

The Global Times, a Chinese government mouthpiece, has bragged about its social credit system restricting 2.56 million Chinese citizens from purchasing plane tickets and 90,000 entities from buying high-speed rail tickets in July alone. Chinese citizens are punished by having their social credit score lowered for engaging in a number of different behaviours, including, *buying too much junk food, buying too many video games, buying too much alcohol, calling a friend who has a low credit score, walking their dog without a leash, criticizing the government, visiting unauthorized websites* and many more trivial matters. Just imagine what happens with the big issues and in China don't even think about asking for your social credit score to be reviewed. As of November 2018, 6.7 million Chinese people had already been banned from buying air and train tickets and that number is surging.

While many decry China's Orwellian social credit score system, they simultaneously advocate for a similar thing in the west, where people are de-platformed and have their right to engage in commerce revoked because of their political views. Imagine going to buy groceries with your credit card but then having your payment declined because someone in Tweed Heads thinks you posted something "hateful" on the Internet. Well this is our collective future along with a \$10,000 limit on cash purchases.....sound familiar. We live in a digital gulag.

Until next time this is Kent Bayley