


# Assessing Norm Building Under Conditions of Informational Inequality



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# Problem: understanding information disclosure & power

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Q: How does social structure affect privacy and personal disclosure?

Q: How do the power imbalances between individuals and companies affect one's decision to disclose info?

Q: Does examining personal disclosure from a perspective that accounts for social structure reframe the privacy paradox? (secret answer: yes!)

# Our Core Question(s)

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1. How are ‘appropriate’ norms determined in the context of what Nissenbaum describes as ‘informational inequality’?
2. What kinds of social processes constructed these norms in the first place?

# The shortest definition of Social Exchange Theory possible

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SET is a set of theories focusing “on the benefits people obtain from, and contribute to, social interaction.” The main assumptions are:

1. Behavior is motivated by the desire to increase gain and to avoid loss;
2. Exchange relations develop in structures of mutual dependence (that there is some reason to engage in exchange to obtain resources of value);
3. Actors engage in recurrent, mutually contingent exchanges with specific partners over time
4. Valued outcomes obey the psychological principle of satiation.

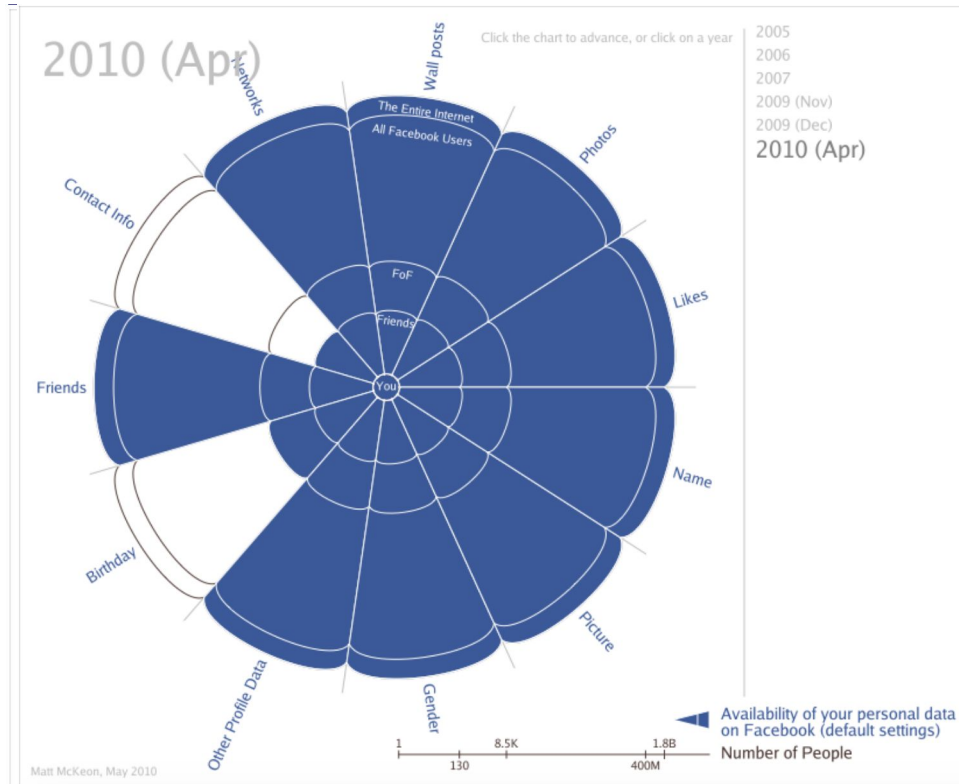
*Power* is a potential that derives from the structural relations among actors, based on their relative dependence on one another

# SET + Contextual Integrity

- SET is useful for analyzing personal disclosure, but it doesn't provide a definition of privacy
- Defined privacy in terms of CI
- But stumbled on this question:

In disclosure relationships that are marked by extreme power imbalances, such as information asymmetries, who defines the norms of disclosure?

# Example: Facebook's 2009 profile & platform changes



Source: <http://mattmckeon.com/facebook-privacy/>

## Did this “social norm” just evolve?

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“People have really gotten comfortable not only sharing more information and different kinds, but more openly and with more people. That social norm is just something that has evolved over time.” – Mark Zuckerberg, 2010

# How do we account for power in Contextual Integrity?

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- Had FB followed CI in 2009 they would have found (as they eventually did) that the changes they pushed violated CI--but they could and did dictate the terms of exchange on the platform;
- Powerful actors can manipulate the norms of exchange for their own advantage, undermining the meaning of contextually appropriate norms;
- What implications will this have for contextual integrity, if norms in digital contexts continue to be influenced by those with the power to construct their architectures as well as significantly influence the shaping of norms themselves?