

Heading for a 'privacy apocalypse'

By [Anice Hassim](#)

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Big data is all the rage, but what does that mean in real terms in 2016 and is it just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the implications for privacy protection and the unchecked harvesting of consumer experiences?



Privacy hostilities

Because of the data gathering and analysis capabilities of the big ecosystems (networks of flexible and adaptable companies, each of which affects and is affected by the others), private companies now know more about your behaviour than the most totalitarian State ever did. What will they do with it? There is a very real possibility that a major brand or service will suffer an attack or breach that may embarrass ordinary consumers by exposing the kind of information that users will be shocked to discover is openly out there. This will affect both corporations and

customers alike.

Harvesting experiences

With their advertising-based revenue model, services like Google and Facebook are basically harvesting people's lives. Your experiences are hoovered up, tracked and analysed and your humanity farmed and sold to the highest bidder. As a result of this, trust will be a key commodity going into the future and companies cannot just ask consumers to give away their personal information mindlessly to 'the machine'.

Smart sensors

This, coupled with the explosion of data that the Internet of Things (IoT) has facilitated, will bring the privacy issue into stark relief. Fortunately, data analysis has an incredible power to [improve the world](#) - but at what personal cost to privacy or our essential humanity?

Real-time revolution

The ultimate drivers of the 'real-time revolution' are platforms like Amazon, Netflix and Uber that offer services which give the consumer more contextual and relevant options than ever before. The elimination of lag in a consumer's life is compelling and having tasted the future with these existing services, society will see a tip over to a gold rush of new platforms that hope to follow in the wake of these leaders. This will result in a 'rump' of relatively low value consumers, who will accept constant intrusion, monitoring and carnival barking, to offset their inability to afford the service.

The power of personality

The big payoff for companies entering this new age is that modern technology allows them far more personality than ever before and they will have to shift their focus from pure brand sells, to actually delivering services with a personality that resonates with users at a personal level. The more our world is ruled by algorithms, the more we will demand to be treated as humans.

ABOUT ANICE HASSIM

Anice Hassim is the CEO, Founder and majority shareholder of the immedia ecosystem. He is a speaker and educator around digital trends, strategy and marketing, and helps brands

better understand and negotiate the digital space. Contact Anice on tel +27 (0)31 566 8000, email him at anice@immedia.co.za and follow him on Twitter at [@anicehassim](https://twitter.com/anicehassim)

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