

The Language of Surveillance: The Weaponization of Rhetoric in Data Collection

Research Question: How do major tech companies use rhetoric to obscure predatory data collection?

Introduction:

Every time you agree to a privacy policy, you might be giving away more than you think. Tech companies use rhetoric to carefully craft their language to make predatory data collection seem harmless. Privacy policies and terms of service are purposefully crafted to be confusing, time-consuming, and difficult to read. This is no accident, they don't want users to truly understand what they are signing up for. Devices like Apple's Siri and Amazon's Alexa collect large amounts of personal information and even ambient conversations. However, the rhetoric surrounding these products often focuses on convenience and safety, downplaying the extent of the data being gathered. The scope of the data that many companies gather from you is extensive, ranging from age to household income and relationship status. My paper will analyze how companies use rhetoric to obscure their invasive data collection, and how understanding these strategies can reveal the illusion of digital privacy in modern society.

Aims, Objectives, and Methodology:

The aim of this paper is to analyze how large corporations use rhetoric to conceal invasive data collection. By focusing on research papers and rhetoric analysis of common privacy policies, this paper will uncover how invasive the data collection is and the consequences of such.

Objective 1: Use research papers to further dive into how companies use data collection internally and how it is collected from the user, focusing on peer reviewed studies, from the UCF catalog and google scholars.

Objective 2: Conduct a rhetorical analysis of privacy policies from select major tech companies, focusing on the language used to obscure or downplay data collection practices.

Objective 3: Evaluate the implications of Aggressive data harvesting and solutions to the problem, focusing on current solutions already in place around the world.

While I have not chosen my exact evidence yet I do have an idea on how I will gather it. The privacy policies will come from their respective domains (ex. <https://policies.google.com/privacy>), and the research papers will be sourced from the UCF library database and from Google scholar. The papers specifically will focus on more of the data collection side and not the implications of such.

Timeline:

Starting at week 5: I will be when I start research into rhetoric used in data collection specifically from privacy policies, I will also start drafting the intro and section of the paper that discusses the

findings from the rhetorical analysis. I will also aim for about 3 different analysis but it might be lower

Week 6: I will be researching use of rhetoric in marketing materials for devices like Siri and Alexa and how it focuses on data collection as a possible avenue of evidence but will be mainly gathering data from research papers and compiling them

Week 7: Start and finish the rough draft of the paper

week 8: Finalize the rough draft and have proof read (thinking of using The university writing center for this)

Ethical considerations:

I will gather and source all of my data ethically, only using trusted and vetted sources for my data. There will be no use of leaks or any other illegally gotten data as support for my paper.

** Footnote:

I might also do research into the following topics: the CEO'S of these tech companies, AI, Laws regarding data privacy,leaks due to weak data protection, and other potential topics relating to data privacy.