

Our fundamental right to privacy is at stake.

We will defend it.



We get involved — with charming and effective action



(Foto: photocube · Verena Hornung)

A government that strips us down until we're naked? We visualised this threat to our privacy when we handed an open letter to the German Interior Ministry, demanding a General Data Protection Regulation that does its name justice.

"The more people with civil and moral courage a country has, the fewer heroes it will need in the future."

Franca Magnani, Italian journalist

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Modern myth: Nothing to hide?

Collected responses to a dangerous fallacy.



Anyone who is concerned with surveillance will hear this statement over and over again. Though dangerous and false, it is very persistent. And we are fed up with it. Eleven points against the notion that you have “nothing to hide”:

1. It is false

Or why do you close the bathroom door behind you?

2. It is stupid

For it ignores the connection between freedom, secrets and power dynamics: Somebody who knows everything about us can easily blackmail us, or impersonate us (identity theft).

3. It is backward

What is socially accepted today could cause you trouble tomorrow. Or would you have thought twenty years ago that your health insurance company could make your premiums dependent on your eating habits?

4. It forgets history

For it disregards the consequences of radical changes of government. German history in particular shows that information collected on the population will develop a horrifying potential for abuse in the hands of radical regimes.

5. It is illogical

It implies: If you have something to hide, you have done something wrong, which you now have to hide. That is a very common logical fallacy (confusion of the inverse): Although criminal activity is hidden, that does not mean that everything that is hidden is also criminal.

6. It stigmatises

For it conveys that you have to subject yourself to a norm to be tolerated. Anyone who does “weird” things in bed, smokes hashish or has a love affair, is lumped together with criminals.

7. It displays a lack of solidarity

The more people believe that they have nothing to hide, the more suspicious it becomes to have secrets in the first place.

8. It is naïve

A single piece of information like your date of birth or your hobby may be harmless. But based on large amounts of such pieces of data (“big data”), companies already construct profiles to predict and manipulate your behaviour. The potential for abuse (for example by marriage impostors, stalkers or sexual assailants) and identity theft is grossly underestimated.

9. It obstructs resistance

Those who disclose their whole lives, making themselves susceptible to blackmail and manipulation, will subsequently find it much harder to defend against undemocratic or inhumane authorities.

10. It is ignorant

Secrets – as not only pubescent teenagers know – are crucial for shaping our identity. To exercise our many different roles in everyday life, we particularly have to be able to self-determine who knows what about us. Or do you want your boss to know that you had to see the doctor for a fungal infection?

11. It is anti-democratic

Without secrets, there can be no free formation of opinion, a precondition of free suffrage. Polling booths are there for a reason. Those who cannot conceal their voting behaviour can be blackmailed and manipulated.

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