

If you've discovered this book summary, then you most likely use the internet to some extent. Let's be realistic, it would be very hard to cope in life nowadays without partaking with the digital world. Also, this is the perfect circumstance for the present surveillance capitalists.

Surveillance capitalism is the business of taking the data of people and making use of it to generate profit. This comprises search history, biometric data, contacts, location tracking, when you go to bed, and wake up, how frequently you charge your battery – the list continues. Afterward, this data is analyzed for behavioral patterns and sold to assist advertisers with better target clients.

A lot of books that are critical of surveillance capitalism are however assisting to normalize it by basically suggesting that people switch off their devices frequently and reduce the time used on social media. However, author Shoshana Zuboff is anticipating that individuals won't agree to take these disturbing practices as the new status quo and maintain hope that we can discover a means to create better privacy laws in the digital work.

## Chapter 1 - In surveillance capitalism, all parts of the human experience are changed into data and sold various businesses for different reasons.

Are you aware of what amount of your movements, speech, activities, experiences, as well as deeds, are being processed and sold by corporations such as Google, Facebook, Microsoft, and Amazon? Some of us know, and that's only how the purveyors of surveillance capitalism would want to maintain it.

Firstly, your personal data can assist companies in better target their advertising attempts. Are you getting close to a McDonald's? This is an advertisement for a Big Mac.

However, it can as well assist to make predictive products, like virtual assistants such as Amazon's Alexa, which are then made use of to gather more profitable data.

Google was the pioneer in surveillance capitalism and it stays as the leader. However, soon enough other firms saw the significance of this new personal data market. Nevertheless, as soon as Google started making use of the data to enhance the accuracy of targeted ads, the company saw a change from bleeding money to witnessing a 3,590-percent rise in income – in only four years!

The first company to follow the footsteps of Google was Facebook, and it is only Facebook who competes with Google in the absolute amount of gathered data. In a study that was done in 2015 at the University of Pennsylvania, researchers checked the top one million most famous websites. They discovered that 90% of them disclosed personal data to an average of nine outside domains where this data is tracked and utilized for commercial reasons. Out of the websites that disclosed information, 78% send information to Google-owned outside domains, whereas 34% send to Facebook-owned domains.

Similar to Google, Facebook sells advertisers targeting information that comprises of email addresses, website visits, phone numbers as well as contact detail from across the internet. In the year 2012, Facebook included a short mention of this new tracking policy to a new terms-of-service agreement that was really long that few individuals were likely to read each and every word. This type of unreadable contract is a classic surveillance capitalism strategy.

However, that kind of tracking is not restricted to internet browsing. Other research has discovered that a lot of apps sold for Google Android devices have trackers that disclose personal data even when they're not being utilized actively. Also, maybe not surprising, Google Android devices themselves, just like most "smart" devices being sold nowadays, offer a regular stream of location as well as behavior data.

How did we arrive here? What is the reason why using the internet or digital products now basically signifies giving access to forceful monitoring by strange parties? In the next few chapters, we'll examine how surveillance capitalism came about.

## Chapter 2 - Prior modifications to capitalism assisted loosen regulations and transform outlooks for the online age.

The narrative of surveillance capitalism is a contemporary one. However, in order to know its rise and present dominance, we have to examine the 1970s and 1980s. During this period, the rules of capitalism itself went through a vital transformation.

Before the 1970s, capitalism was a thing that entailed a system of laws as well as policies, jointly called the double movement, which was made to defend people from capitalism run amok.

As it was described by Karl Polanyi, the historian, the double movement was incorporated into the capitalist system to ensure that the institutions associated weren't destroying labor, land, and money. Polanyi, just like Adam Smith as well as other economists before him, knew that capitalism had likely damaging tendencies. Unscrutinized greed and power-mongering can have a harmful impact, and the double movement was made precisely to counter these tendencies.

During the 1970s, two strong voices came to the forefront of economic policy, and they both proposed we'd be comfortable without the double movement. These two strong voices were Friedrich Hayek who was an Austrian economist and Milton Friedman American economist. These two men talked about the gospel of a self-regulating free-market economy, freed from bothersome things such as laws and regulations that just served to restrict the endless potential of the capitalist enterprise.

Both Hayek and Friedman got Nobel Prizes. This credit confirmed their ideas and is most likely the reason why these ideas were immediately implemented across the globe. Double movement regulations were completely removed in the United States – first, under the Jimmy Carter regime, then during Ronald Reagan's time. In Europe, free-market capitalism was regarded as the ideal solution to the dangers of communism and totalitarianism.

However, it is not a coincidence that in the years since the breaking down of the double movement, social as well as economic inequality has gotten to extremely high rates. In current decades, unprecedented amounts of money have been sent to the uppermost income brackets. In the year 2016, a report from the International Monetary Fund went really far as to refer to this unequal gathering of wealth a risk to stability.

In this uncontrolled corporate world, surveillance capitalism flourishes. One time, the inventor Thomas Edison saw what others, as well as the sociologist Emil Durkheim, have observed: the

principles of capitalism turn into the principles of the whole society. If Google is prosperous, it ought to be right and good. Also, if surveillance capitalism is prosperous within the self-governing rules of free-market capitalism, then it, as well, ought to be right and good.

## Chapter 3 - Early worries about online privacy were destroyed in approval of unsecured surveillance laws.

Surveillance capitalism has been noticed. Certainly, a lot of smart individual people are bothered. Although, what is fascinating is that when we reflect back, we notice that these worries can immediately vanish and change into acceptance.

Let's look at the problem by examining cookies. Different from the delicious baked goods, the cookies on our computers are not something to consider as good. They monitor us anywhere we go on the internet, and they were not welcomed well. In the year 1996, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) started taking measures to curb how much personal data cookies disclosed. The FTC didn't follow the wish of advertisers to offer an easily automated protocol that would put personal data in the user's power by default.

The FTC knew that self-regulation wasn't excellent when it came to building and securing online privacy. Also, in the year 2000, they were getting close to having legislation that would make the laws of online commerce related to those offline. Sadly, those plans were hindered by the occurrences of September 11, 2001.

After the invasions, the US government didn't secure privacy laws in cyberspace; instead, it went the opposite direction, establishing the Patriot Act as well as the Terrorist Screening Program, which remarkably freed regulations surrounding surveillance. The CIA as well as the NSA, particularly, immediately increased their attempts to watch internet activity. As expected, they asked Google for assistance.

In the year 2003, Google worked together with the NSA and the CIA to give the agencies better search technologies. The devices that Google gave let them analyze heaps of metadata, recognize behavioral patterns, and forecast future behaviors.

Eventually, Google's wealth trove of personal information is the exact type of data for which both advertisers and law enforcement agencies will pay lots of money for. In the year 2003, after getting special contracts with the NSA and the CIA, Google proceeded to sustain a mutually profitable relationship with the intelligence community. In the year 2010, Mike McConnell the NSA Director wrote about the necessity for a "seamless" relationship with Google, in order for information to keep on flowing without being obstructed.

This takes us back to cookies. A study that was conducted in 2015 revealed that, by going through the 100 most common websites, your computer would gather more than 6,000 cookies. Also, the study discovered that 83% of the cookies were from third parties – not the websites that were actually checked. How did this happen? Google's "tracking infrastructure" was seen to be active on 92 of the leading 100 sites.

## Chapter 4 - Perfect illustrations of atrocity changing to acceptance are Google's Street View and Glass operations.

Initial worries about the internet-wide tracking abilities of cookies have obviously failed to persist. Also, as we examine how surveillance capitalism came about, we can notice that this is a recurring pattern. There is an initial atrocity upon finding the invasive practices of surveillance capitalists. However, this ultimately changed into a sense of resenting acceptance.

Unfortunately, this plays right into the hands of businesses such as Google and Facebook, who obviously want the masses at large to think that their practices are unavoidable.

There's a probability that you've noticed the odd-looking Google car, that has a 360-degree camera protruding out just like a periscope. However, maybe, you were not aware that those kinds of cars were capturing more than only pictures.

In the year 2010, it was discovered by a German federal agency that the Google Street View cars were silently scanning WiFi networks and gathering personal data from any of the unencrypted transmissions they met. Obviously, this brought about international chaos. Also, after an inspection in 12 nations, Google is guilty of infringing laws in at least nine countries.

But, prosecuting situations such as these aren't really direct. The main issue is that the practices of surveillance capitalism are unprecedented; therefore, there actually aren't any laws that precisely deal with privacy and boundary problems in the digital world. As you already know, Google's Street View program has basically continued to grow.

In the year 2012, there was also a public uproar concerning the emergence of Google Glass, a wearable technology that permitted Google to check into private spaces. The negative response brought about a rebranding and the emergence of the "Glass Enterprise Edition" in the year 2017, which placed the product as being made only for the workplace, where individuals may already possess lesser expectations of privacy.

However, Google had already discovered a wildly successful manner of getting into the nooks and corners of private life. Niantic, which is the gaming firm that is owned by Google's Alphabet Inc., released Pokémon Go in 2016. The game makes use of a device's camera and GPS data to disclose the place of virtual Pokémon creatures that users can take. Those Pokémon can be situated in the backyard of people and inside companies –locations where Street View cameras may have not captured yet.

The game was a hugely famous occurrence. However, it's actually a remarkable way of getting personal data. The actual reason why the game needs access to your contacts and requires "to find accounts on the device" doesn't have anything to do with gameplay and has everything to do with surveillance capitalism.

**Chapter 5 - Surveillance capitalism is becoming more granular in its data gathering.**

By now, you may be wondering, certainly, Google gathers various kinds of data; however, there's nothing to hide from them; therefore why should I bother?

Well, even though you're ready to lead your life just like an open book, if you're an admirer of democracy or free will, you have to bother. As we'll notice, gathering location as well as browsing habits on people is just one step in the process.

Google's goals are extensive. The firm would love to know all the things about your past and present circumstances so that, instead of asking Google a question, it would be possible for Google to "know what you want and answer before you even ask the question." Nevertheless, this is how Hal Varian, Google's chief economist, described the company's aims.

This entails getting down to granular information about your needs and wants, and also your emotional state. The field of emotional analytics, at times referred to as "affective computing," has evolved in order for even the microexpressions on your face can be noticed and identified straightaway as signifying a certain emotional state. Definitely, one appearance of your face can as well show age, ethnicity, and sex.

Realeyes is one of the more innovative firms in this area, which claims a data set of above 5.5 million annotated frames of more than 7,000 subjects across the globe— all in an attempt to make the world's biggest collection of feelings, expressions, and behavioral hints.

All of these aspects signify a hit of data for advertisers. A market research report on the issue plainly mentions that "Knowing real-time emotional state can assist businesses to sell their product and hence increase profits." Or, as it is on the Realeyes website, "the more people feel, the more they spend."

Also, body posture and movements are hints into what a person is doing and their feeling. This is the reason why Google is creating digitally improved fabrics that can be changed into clothes that people can wear. This will bring an entirely new stage of granular behavioral information to Google's regularly increasing collection.

However, if someone is active on social media, their personal posts, as well as news feed, can be analyzed too to provide a precise forecast of the person's feelings. Also, when advertisers,

as well as other surveillance capitalists, understand what you're doing and how you are feeling, they'll recognize the best time to push you in the desired way.

However, how can surveillance capitalists actually change a person's behavior? We'll talk more about that in the following chapter.

## Chapter 6 - Surveillance capitalists wish to pinpoint important moments of sensitivity so as to increase the probabilities of purchase as well as behavior change.

Since a major part of Silicon Valley is into analyzing behavioral information, it is reasonable that firms such as Google and Facebook would be concerned in the questionable field of behaviorism.

Nevertheless, behaviorism informs us that free will is but an illusion; every behavior can be explained by the situations that came before it. Expose individuals to certain stimuli and you'll get a certain response.

An intelligent person in behaviorism is B. F. Skinner, who was a professor at Harvard University and an inventor in both behavioral analyses as well as utopian thinking. In Skinner's perspective, there is nothing like free will or freedom, and if you believe that there is – well, that's only an expression of your lack of knowledge.

All actions can be mathematically clarified with behavioral data under Skinner's brand of extreme behaviorism. Also, if a person's actions apparently challenge explanation, then, the only reason is that we haven't gathered enough of the appropriate data.

Skinner died in 1990, which signifies that he didn't live to witness the day when a lot of people were going around with smartphones, living with smart speakers, and making use of virtual assistants. These are precisely the type of devices Skinner fantasized about being able to use to observe and experiment on his participants.

Don't be confused, Google and Facebook are performing experiments already and using the procedures that Skinner left behind. As the professor suggested, the perfect scenario for precise behavioral analysis is when the subjects do not know the people that are performing the experiment and gathering the data.

Facebook has confessed to conducting an experiment with the content of people's news feeds, and a precise method to look at Pokémon Go is as an experimental test, managed by Google, to see if individuals can be digitally manipulated to go where directed, and also spend cash.

At the height of Pokémon Go's fame, the game permitted companies to pay money so as to turn into hotspots – places where players were certain to see the virtual creatures they were looking for. These companies saw reported increases in the business of about 70%.

## Chapter 7 - The invasive, all-controlling future of surveillance capitalism doesn't need to be regarded as unavoidable.

Two books were published in the year 1948. One of the books was B. F. Skinner's *Walden Two*. This showed his own account of a utopian society where extreme behaviorism was recognized and taken, and individuals stopped bothering themselves with the absurd delusion of personal freedom. The second book was written by George Orwell's 1984, which also presented a look at a society without personal freedom. However, instead of showing it as a utopia, Orwell clearly regarded it as a dystopia.

One of these books, *Walden Two*, was extensively criticized by critics upon its release, while the other remains to be a painfully important caution for what our society could be like if we surrender a lot of power to those in charge of power.

In spite of the cautions in Orwell's book, the providers of surveillance capitalism want to be in our houses, cars, stores, as well as our places of work, watching all the things we say and do. From their viewpoint, this would permit for all manners of conveniences.

The new car contract of Google is one of the more common illustrations in Google's vision of utopia. In this contract, if you do not pay a car payment, your car will automatically stop

functions. No need for bothersome paperwork or the trouble of sending a person to check what's happening with you. Everything can be automated.

Don't bother about the obvious questions about the driver and how an unexpected stoppage such as this might part a parent from her kid or stop a person from leaving a risky circumstance. Just consider how much bureaucracy we'd be able to bypass!

These types of automated contracts are a thing surveillance capitalists love to explain as unavoidable. However, the reality is, none of these things are unavoidable.

Lately, we had a better examination of what's regarded standard working procedure at Facebook. In the year 2018, it was shown that they'd given huge amounts of personal information to Cambridge Analytica, which is a company that utilized the data to micro-target voters with a campaign of false information.

This has brought about some disturbing questions about the state of democracy now and the risks that occur when the keepers of data are provided free control to gather anything they want from us and put it into any kind of use they see suitable.

## Chapter 8 - Surveillance capitalism isn't "inevitable," and individuals aren't set and ready to surrender privacy in the name of convenience.

Therefore, what can be done regarding surveillance capitalism?

Firstly, it's significant for individuals to know the actual idea of what's happening behind the scenes, and that there are other choices.

Surveys that were done in the year 2009 and 2015 revealed that between 73 and 91% of individuals dismiss the actual idea of targeted advertising when informed about the means in which their personal information is being gathered.

At the moment, there is a massively uneven balance in the data. This spreads to how businesses are gathering personal data, what types of data are being gathered and analyzed, and what that data is utilized for. When this gets clear, outrage immediately comes after.

Also, it is significant to defend yourself now. There is an era of individuals growing up having never known a world that doesn't have smartphones. Not just is this era more susceptible to standardizing the practices of surveillance capitalism; they're as well particularly prone to the psychological impacts of these practices.

In the year 2017, Sean Parker, the former Facebook president confessed that Facebook, just like every other social media platform, makes use of behaviorist strategies like variable reinforcement to keep individuals running after hits of dopamine – and, more significantly, to keep them focused to their news feed.

Not surprisingly, this leads to the exact same depressive psychological symptoms that individuals undergoing addiction and withdrawal feeling. However, together with addiction, the near-constant online exposure that this present teen's face has also been displayed to create feelings of isolation, boredom, distress as well as confusion.

Research has revealed that "Facebook use does not enhance well-being," and that is also the case for the practices of surveillance capitalism as a whole. However, it doesn't need to be like this.

In the year 2000, researchers at Georgia Tech were creating the Aware Home. This was a vision of "ubiquitous computing" that is close to the "smart home" that surveillance capitalists are making to happen. The huge difference is that the Aware Home was made with putting user privacy into consideration.

The information generated by the users would be in their power. It respected the age-old idea of a person's home being their haven and a place where the people could be free from surveillance.

Unfortunately, a year after, that idea was removed by the occurrences of September 11. However, that doesn't signify that we should surrender this valuable dream.

# The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power By Shoshana Zuboff Book Review

After the occurrences of September 11, 2001, attempts to have online privacy laws were set aside. Nowadays, there are really a number of laws to protect your personal information from being gathered and sold to advertisers and utilized to make stronger predictive smart devices. This data comprises biometric data, email addresses, browsing history, phone numbers, location history, as well as even a psychological profile based on your social media accounts. This data is getting more precise and granular as more innovative “smart” devices are getting into the market and reducing the amount of space that is not being observed for behavioral data.

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