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“Big Data and Surveillance: Who is Watching and Whom”

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Abstract

The notion of “surveillance” has been a part of governance for a long period of time where governments have been interested in knowing more about the people they govern. Ancient societies, dating back to the Egyptians, utilized spies to know more about the people who could be dissidents and “trouble-makers,” and such tendencies have gone on over the ages, with most governments utilizing systems such as secret police, citizen informers, and tacit observation to learn more of the citizens. The entrance of the Internet as a part of everyday life in developed and developing countries has offered a new and different level of surveillance that can far exceed the capabilities of governments. In this lecture, the professor will focus on two primary aspects of the new developments. First, the rapid adoption of the development of the “digital self” has led to individuals offering greater amounts and depth of information about the “real self” in the form of structured and unstructured data that makes up what we call “Big Data.” This leads to the second factor – governments can now access this data and the penetration of surveillance can be much deeper than what was possible before. These two factors leads to concerns about privacy and a different way of managing one’s digital self where an individual has to balance the conveniences offered by the Internet while recognizing the levels of surveillance that a person is open to.

Bio

Dr. Ananda Mitra is currently a professor at the Department of Communication, Wake Forest University, North Carolina. He specializes in Speech Communication and Digital Society and has written numerous books on the topic. Dr. Mitra has focused his research on the role of new digital technologies in shaping everyday life practices that range from the use of computers in teaching to the way in which the marginalized can gain a voice through the use of Internet. He has also looked into the social and cultural issues related to South Asia.

Some of his published works include a series seven of books under the title *The Digital World*, some of which are *Digital Security: Cyber Terror and Cyber Security (2010)*, *Digital Research (2010)*, *Digital Security: Cyber Terror and Cyber Security (2010)*. Also, *Alien Technology: Coping with Modern Mysteries (2010)*, *India through the Western lens (1999)* and *India on the Western Screen: Imaging a Country in Film, TV and Digital Media*.

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