

Ethical Case Study Analysis

Karla Flores-Cavani

University of South Florida

LIS 4934.001F23

Dr. Richard Austin

October 9th, 2023

In the following analysis, I will be examining the case study of “The internet of Things” and how the number of devices each person has. Homes are now automated, and it alters our reality and is regulated by the internet of things. In Both readings from the Brookings Institute, “Alternative Perspectives on the Internet of Things” and an article, “Wearables: The Well-dressed Privacy Policy “, goes into depth about wearable technology and further explains how the internet of things is going to be everywhere but could also help in surveillance and monitoring in the future. With all the devices each person has grows there grows concern for security risks, one device may be very secure but the other could be very vulnerable, as for example refrigerators now have some type of internet access. It is possible that the refrigerator is connected to one’s home network and once there one can access other devices in the household.

To continue in the case study “The internet of things”, mentioned that all the devices we wear and connect to and have automated in our homes work together, to make our reality more comfortable in a way. The video described an example of the individual’s computer knowing it was a long day at work and the watch noticed the individual was stressed so instead of the rock music the home always plays, it played something more soothing and classical, as well as raising the temperature of the home because it was cold outside waiting for them to come home. Back in the day someone would have to do all this manually and would still be stressed doing all these tasks. So, it makes things easier for us. In the video it also mentions that it is estimated in the future there will be 50 billion objects connected to the internet, and the internet of things will just be so full of information it will change our reality.

To further explain, as there are many positives to the internet of things, there are drawbacks. Primarily my concern is how secure are these devices and who will have access to them. Not all devices are secure and as mentioned in the video because of the increasing number of devices on average each person will have an estimated 6.6 devices connected to themselves or their environment. Lots of possibilities for information to be stolen. As mentioned in the reading from the Brookings institute (Karsten 2016), "For now, the unanswered question remains: How many refrigerators does it take to catch a terrorist?". As in the reading it mentions intelligent services might be able to use IOT for surveillance and tracking, etc. A weak point could possibly be refrigerators, as those shown to be vulnerable and those connected to the home network. Keep in mind it's not always an intelligence service trying to locate someone, it could be a malicious person trying to attack or steal your information through that device or another device in the household.

To expand on this, in the article, "Wearables: the well-dressed privacy policy", goes on to explain how "wearable", wearable technology devices, like watches, fitness trackers, glasses, and smart clothing gather information about its user. In the privacy policy it shows that it will not share this information with a third party, but there is a possibility that the business would need to share information with a third party. As well as using a wearable device to track a user's running statistics, it will need to use gps and collect that location data to be able to accurately map and log in the running information. Any of that information can have a possibility of being stolen if there is a data breach, and a wearable contains much more personal user information.

In conclusion, internet of all things can be very useful and is ever growing as we have technological advancements. I agree it can make a person's life easier and more catered for around them, but with all good things comes a risk, especially if in the future each person would have at least 6.6 devices, with 50 billion connected to the internet of things. This can cause an issue with security risks and information being stolen by having a device being unsecure being connected to your network. Furthermore, with wearable devices even more personalized information can be stolen from the user as it gathers location information and health information as well.

References

- Singer, R. W., & Perry, A. J. (2015). Wearables: the well-dressed privacy policy. Intellectual Property & Technology Law Journal, 27(7), 24+.
<https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A420929651/AONE?u=tamp44898&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=74b7983c>
- What is the internet of things?. TED. (n.d.).
<https://ed.ted.com/on/VGdKwYzz#watch>
- Anthony F. Pipa, L. L., Levin, B., & Keller, J. B. (2016, July 29). Alternative perspectives on the internet of things. Brookings.
<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/alternative-perspectives-on-the-internet-of-things/>