NAWA Media

Importance of Privacy in the Digital Age

Section: 3.6

What is Privacy?

According to Privacy International, privacy is one right that serves as the foundation upon which many other human rights are built. This is precisely what makes it so important.

Privacy is freedom from all kinds of interference or intrusions and the right to have some control over how your personal information is collected and used

Further Reading:
"OHCHR and privacy in the digital age"
**www.ohchr.org/en/issues/digitalage/pages/
digitalageindex.aspx**

**"Privacy Matters,"
privacyinternational.org/learning-resources/
privacy-matters**

Importance of Privacy

The right to privacy enables us to draw our own boundaries and determine who we would like to interact with. It serves as a barrier that protects us from unwarranted interference.

According to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, the right to privacy generally entails the right

    a. to be free from interference and intrusion,

    b. to associate freely with whom you want, and

    c. to be able to control who can see or use information about you.

The right to privacy is often seen as an enabling right, which allows for the enjoyment of other fundamental human rights such as the freedom of expression and assembly.

Privacy is particularly important for journalists to protect their sources and ensure that their reporting is free from unnecessary interference.

Therefore, the right to privacy protects you from being asked to volunteer information about yourself.

It's okay to want privacy--you're not hiding anything. You don't have to be a tech expert to protect your privacy either!

Privacy doesn't mean Secrecy

Exercising your right to privacy does not mean that you are hiding something. It simply means that you have a right to exercise agency over how your data can be used. Coronavirus-induced lockdowns across the world have resulted in an increase in surveillance on part of governments through governments employing various contact tracing methods to tackle the public health crisis. Citizens are targeted in the name of safety but journalists, particularly those covering the outbreak of the virus and how it is being dealt with, are under serious surveillance across the globe.

Authoritarian states like China are not only expanding their domestic surveillance but are also laying a global infrastructure in which technology is used by different governments to spy on their citizens. According to a report, 18 countries, including Zimbabwe, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Kenya, the United Arab Emirates and Germany, are using Chinese-made intelligent monitoring systems.

Nevertheless you can protect yourself from government surveillance by using tools such as Virtual Private Networks (VPNs).

In the **next** section we will learn about an essential tool to ensure privacy– VPNs.