

## Chapter 3

# Privacy Paradox Amid E-Commerce Epoch: Examining Egyptian Youth's Practices of Digital Literacy Online

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Being an active informed citizen in the new-media era requires the ability to filter through overwhelming content and identify credible sources of information. The crucial element to such a filtration process requires digital literacy's cognitive and technical skills. Currently, media consumption is changing due to robust e-commerce presence, user-generated communication, and the availability of shared users' information. The goal of this research is to examine Egyptian youths' conceptualization of privacy, its application, and examine their knowledge of digital literacy principles and elements. The research methodology uses focus groups and in-depth interviews. The sample consists of Egyptian youth aged 18-30, in addition, interviews with media experts, policymakers, security experts, and psychologists are conducted. This chapter will generate insights relating to privacy-related online behaviors in relation to (a) familiarity with technical aspects of online platforms, (b) awareness of common institutional practices, and (c) understanding of platform's privacy policy.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Digital Media are omnipresent throughout the daily activities of millions of users; they come with explicit functionality yet perilous implicit consequences. Amongst the various hazards of digital media consumption comes the inevitable archiving of users' data. Today, Google knows more information on online users than their psychiatrist and mom united. Given the escalation of the mediated digital milieu, this study examines the application and perception of digital literacy among Egyptian youth concerning

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information and privacy behavior. The goal of this chapter is to tackle how youth -focusing on millennials- with no formal digital literacy education/instruction will practice privacy behavior online and process their risk-management, in addition, explore their awareness of their choices when accessing websites with privacy-laden concerns.

Novel digital technologies have been shaping the social fabric of our societies for the past decades and are still expected to grow and develop substantially, following a similar vein is e-commerce which is undoubtedly yet to reach its full potential. One of the most pondering issues in today's e-commerce practice is individuals' online privacy behavior. Privacy is a complex construct, its nature has been debated and altered pending the industry, time, and context.

A modest conceptualization of privacy that is suitable for the scope of e-commerce is the management of (access and control) over information shared /disseminated online, and the anticipation of negative consequences based on disclosing personal information. More recent privacy concerns arise from consumers' privacy in a dynamic-shaping experience in today's networked publics, where lines of private and public are blurred.

If skill is arguably the known behavior to a known situation or context, then the situation today resembles having online users driving racing cars while blindfolded, oblivious to the risks and hazards that lurk along the way. Digital environs are always disposed to various security vulnerabilities; And with the novel, complex terms of agreement and privacy policies found on e-commerce platforms, online users are prone to risks of sacrificing their personal and private information for the sake of practicality and connectivity.

Amid a cyberspace of networked publics, the most common risk to privacy is the preservation of one's digital footprint. Literature has highlighted the various threats and problems triggered by the large volume of information transactions occurring in digital environments, allowing data to be easily harvested, created, networked, altered, disseminated, and most importantly archived. This chapter with a focus on the notion of digital literacy examines how Egyptian youth perceive privacy and control their digital existence, identity, and information. Furthermore, this chapter provides thoughts on the future of privacy online, and provides guidelines to dodge the brazen hazards of digital connectivity.

## **RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF DIGITAL LITERACY**

With the advancement of computer-mediated tools, media scholars began to offer apprehension about the negative consequences that may arise with the consumption of these technologies. Given the ever-changing nature of technologies, a holistic delineation of what constitutes literacy has been offered by the National Council of Teachers of English (2005) "All modes of communication are code-pendent; each affects the nature of the content and the overall rhetorical impact of the communication event itself" (as cited in Hobbs 2017, p. 5).

Digital Technologies with their embedded interactive forms of communication, ought not to be in less need of critical understanding, on the contrary, they require adapting and ensuing parameters for interminable media convergence. The plethora of scholars' work alongside Ideological perspectives has shaped media literacy's theoretical formulations. Kathleen Welch (1999) offers an understanding of literacy as not confined to "the ability to read and write but an activity of the minds, and being capable of recognizing and engaging substantive issues along with the ways that minds, sensibilities, and emotions

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