



The Spy In The Coffee Machine: The End of Privacy as We Know it

By Kieron O'Hara, Nigel Shadbolt

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What do you know about the new surveillance state that has been created in the wake of pervasive computing – that is, the increasing use of very small and simple computers in all sorts of host – from your computer to your coat? Well, these little computers can communicate via the web and form powerful networks whose emergent behaviour can be very complex, intelligent, and invasive. The question is: how much of an infringement on privacy are they? Could these intelligent networks be used by governments, criminals or terrorists to undermine privacy or commit crimes? From CCTVs to blogging, from cookies to RFID tags, we are sleepwalking into a new state of global hypersurveillance. And when even cans of Coke are connected to the internet, the risk of someone misusing this information is very high indeed. Kieron O'Hara is Senior Research Fellow in Electronics and Computer Science at the University of Southampton, UK. Nigel Shadbolt is Professor of Artificial Intelligence at the University of Southampton, UK, and was President of the British Computer Society in 2006-7.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Timely and balanced, their book *The Spy in the Coffee Machine* is a scary treatise about the way technology has eroded privacy and continues to do so ... The chief lesson of this excellent and potent short book is that we have to learn how to live with these actualities." -- *A. C. Grayling, The New Scientist*

"Offering a wealth of recent detail, O'Hara and Shadbolt provide a singular update and perspective on the accelerating predicament of privacy in the modern age." -- *David Brin, Science fiction writer, futurist, and author of Transparent Society: Will Technology Force Us to Choose Between Privacy and Freedom?*

"Kieron O'Hara and Nigel Shadbolt have offered an engaging and thought provoking roadmap for the emerging field of Web Science. They crisply survey what lies ahead as the Web becomes ubiquitous, and they invite everyone -- not just academics and experts -- to think about how to preserve the Web's magic while avoiding its most unsettling prospects." -- *Jonathan Zittrain, Professor of Internet Governance and Regulation, Oxford University*

"This book will give anyone concerned about the growing number of CCTV cameras in our streets or the way young people expose their secrets on Facebook a sound appreciation of the wider issues. It will also arm them with a better ability to judge the trade-offs that we are asked to make on a daily basis between public and private." -- *Bill Thompson, BBC Focus Magazine*

"While critics have variously demanded control over the internet, the practical means have been ignored; O'Hara and Shadbolt readdress this, offering detailed accounts of how technology that threatens privacy can be used to protect it." -- *Times Literary Supplement, May 27, 2008*

About the Author

Kieron O'Hara is Senior Research Fellow in Electronics and Computer Science at the University of Southampton, UK. He is the author or co-author of nine other books about technology, politics and society, including *Inequality.com: Power, Poverty, and the Digital Divide*, also published by Oneworld. Nigel Shadbolt is Professor of Artificial Intelligence at the University of Southampton, UK, and was President of the British Computer Society in its 50th anniversary year 2006-2007. He is Chief Technology Officer of internet security firm Garlik, and a director of the Web Science Research Initiative. He is both a chartered psychologist and a chartered engineer, and sits on a number of UK national science and technology committees.

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