

Wolfgang COY

Volunteered Slavery - Communicate Whenever & Wherever

Modern societies may be characterized by a spread and refinement of surveillance and control, starting from clocks and watches over mass media to internet and mobiles. The tension between society as a control structure and individuals that claim a “right to be left alone” grows despite punctual liberation from dictatorial governments. Governments are nowadays only one player in the fight for data privacy. Large international corporates like financial institutes, insurance companies, Google or Microsoft are as active in this field as small mail-order houses, mailing lists, or web fora. Data Mining, or Customer Relationship Management has become a major industry that is complemented by mafia-like structures stealing and misusing private data. Strange enough the loss of privacy is complemented by a disarming ignorance when private data are given to dealers or spread over social networks like facebook or myspace. Correspondingly phone talks of private nature are disclosed in public places. To be reached whenever and wherever is just another aspect of that open mobile society, where mobile phones and UMTS-Cards may be, and is, located up to a circle of 50m radius inside the city. The “right to be left alone” that has also a political dimension, changed to some voluntary cooperation to be identified and noted everywhere at any time.

Wolfgang COY, born in 1947, studied electrical engineering, mathematics, and philosophy at Technische Hochschule Darmstadt. After working at several universities, among them Universität Dortmund and Paris VI, he was appointed Professor for Informatics at the University of Bremen in 1979. He is now dean of the Faculty II for Mathematics and Sciences of the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and head of a research group for Computers and Society. His research areas include digital media, computers and society, theory of informatics, social and cultural history of informatics, as well as the philosophical foundations of the information society. He has authored, co-authored and edited more than one hundred research papers and several books, among them *Industrieroboter – Archäologie der Zweiten Schöpfung*, Berlin: Rotbuch, 1985, and, together with Martin Warnke and Georg Christoph Tholen, *HyperKult: Geschichte, Theorie und Kontext Digitaler Medien*, Basel: Stroemfeld, 1997 and *HyperKult II: Zur Ortsbestimmung analoger und digitaler Medien*, Bielefeld: 2005. Further information: <http://waste.informatik.hu-berlin.de/Coy>. E-mail: coy@hu-berlin.de.

