

The Surveillance Economy | IRL

By Mozilla

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Shoshana Zuboff: My new book is called “The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power”.

Manoush Z.: Shoshana says these companies are not the democratizing and empowering tools they claim to be. And surveillance capitalism is spreading across our entire economy. A market economy where our private lives are what’s for sale.

Shoshana Zuboff: This is a new era of capitalism in which it is now private, human experience that lives outside the marketplace, that has been unilaterally claimed for the market, dragged into the market, renamed as “behavioral data”, and now traded and exchanged in a new kind of marketplace that is founded and operated by surveillance capitalism.

Manoush Z.: How did you come up with the term “surveillance capitalism”?

Shoshana Zuboff: Well, I think it comes down to this: you know, reading early documents, and listening to many early speeches, and reading some of the early patents, and at this point I’m talking largely about Google, right at the beginning here. Once they discovered that they could extract more behavioral data than they needed to improve, for example, their search products and services, this extra data, that was just at that point sort of stuffed into their data logs, sitting on their servers and not being used, and through a series of events they realized that they could use those data to predict who was most likely to click on which ad.

These extra data are what I call “behavioral surplus”, because it was more than they needed just to improve their products and services. Their desire to hunt and capture these behavioral surplus data was so intense, because it was going to

finally be the road that cracked the code to how to monetize this young internet business. So their desire for these data was so intense that they began to explicitly formulate the idea that they were willing to hunt and capture that data while bypassing the user's awareness.

Therefore, surveillance capitalism is essentially the only thing that you can call it, because it represents the social reality, as well as the economic imperative.

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Source: [The Surveillance Economy](#)