Power and dignity: the ends of online behavioral advertising in the European Union

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Propositions

Accompanying the dissertation

POWER & DIGNITY

The Ends of Online Behavioral Advertising in the European Union

by

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1. Gatekeepers, especially Alphabet and Meta, largely define the consumer experiences online because they provide the central infrastructures, including online behavioral advertising (OBA), that enable digital service providers to fund their websites and apps.

2. In 2018-2022, a large part of Meta's $125 billion revenue stemmed from OBA, for which the company did not have valid legal grounds under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

3. Browser-based OBA, such as those proposed within Alphabet's Privacy Sandbox, can decrease the number of third parties accessing data and mitigate harms stemming from the secondary use of such, but they do not remedy all exploitation harms of OBA.

4. By 2030, consumer exploitation via OBA will be largely extinguished, and OBA will seize to be a primary advertising model for monetizing the Internet.

5. Online advertising based on personal information voluntarily and explicitly disclosed by the consumer (e.g., when signing up) and contextual advertising can provide a profitable business model to support free Internet.

6. Humans have dignity because they are *vulnerable* as plants, not *fragile* as gemstones. Vulnerability is related to sensitivity, which is the source of pain but also growth. In other words, by being vulnerable, humans are "antifragile" – they grow in response to endurable stress. Putting humans under unendurable or irrecoverable stress exploits their vulnerability and takes away their dignity.

7. Generative artificial intelligence (AI) applications prioritize noise over signal, quantity over quality, and plausibility over meaning.

8. The biggest threat of AI is not human extinction but the accumulation of wealth and power in a handful of companies that develop AI tools.

9. Exploiting vulnerability covertly (manipulation) or overtly (coercion) is not always morally wrong. In Georgian "Suphra", a toastmaster, "Tamada," resorts to various exploitative practices to keep *all* guests entertained, whether they want it or not.

10. James Bond's favorite beer is best enjoyed after playing football with friends.