Contextual Integrity in Practice

ABSTRACT

The theory contextual integrity defines privacy as a right to *appropriate* personal information flow, rather than -- as often is claimed--a right to stop flow or control it. It conceives of appropriateness as compliance with contextual (social) informational norms, following an ages-old idea that appropriate flows of information not only protect individuals against shame, embarrassment, and other harms, but also, promote core purposes and values of fundamental *social* domains, such as education, homelife, political governance, healthcare, and others. As an account of privacy and its value to individuals and social life, contextual integrity has entered the mainstream. As an account that serves practical needs, resolving particular privacy problems encountered in technology design and government regulation, more work is needed. In this talk, I will review key premises of contextual integrity and discuss efforts to cover the distance between theory and practice in a world increasingly reliant on data.

Helen Nissenbaum, Professor of Information Science, Cornell Tech
Prof. Nissenbaum's work spans societal, ethical, and political dimensions of information technologies and digital media. Her books include Obfuscation: A User's Guide for Privacy and Protest, with Finn Brunton (MIT Press, 2015), Values at Play in Digital Games, with Mary Flanagan (MIT Press, 2014), and Privacy in Context: Technology, Policy, and the Integrity of Social Life (Stanford, 2010). Grants from the National Science Foundation, Air Force Office of Scientific Research, Ford Foundation, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the National Coordinator, and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency have supported her research on privacy, trust online, cyber security, and values in design (of search engines, digital games, facial recognition technology, health information systems, etc.). Recipient of the 2014 Barwise Prize of the American Philosophical Association, Prof. Nissenbaum has contributed to privacy-enhancing software, including TrackMeNot (for protecting against profiling based on Web search) and AdNauseam (protecting against profiling based on ad clicks). Both are free and freely available. Prof. Nissenbaum holds a Ph.D. in philosophy from Stanford University and recently received an honorary doctorate from Leuphana University at Lüneberg in 2017. She previously served as Associate Director of the Center for Human Values at Princeton University.