

Ethical Review of Compulsory Display of User IP Addresses on Multiple Network Platforms

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Abstract: *The mandatory display of users' IP addresses on Internet application platforms has aroused great social concern and discussion. This paper examines this phenomenon ethically based on Marxist ethics. From the perspective of ethical relations, websites, enterprises, governments and individuals are different ethical entities, each of which has the responsibility to protect users' privacy and fulfill the obligation to maintain network security. From the perspective of legal attribute, IP address belongs to the scope of public information, and it is legitimate to disclose IP address. Considering the pros and cons of the society, the display of IP address may cause negative effects such as regional discrimination, but it plays a positive role in protecting the safety of network users. The display of IP address can not cure the Internet chaos, but also needs to be improved by means of informed consent.*

Keywords: Privacy Security; Ip Address; Ethical Review.

1. INTRODUCTION

An IP address is the Internet Protocol address, also translated as Internet Protocol address. Each computer and other device is assigned a unique location on the Internet, called an "IP address". This unique address is the only way to ensure that users can efficiently and easily sift through the large number of computers on the network to find the one that meets their needs. With the continuous development of the Internet industry, the problems faced by the network environment and privacy and security have become increasingly complex and diverse, and as the problems continue to emerge, they have aroused widespread social concern, and therefore the relevant departments and many network platforms have taken corresponding countermeasures. 2022 Since May 2022 Zhihu, Shake, Weibo and other network platforms have added a new function, where the content posted by the user, as well as their home page, the platform will be forced to display the personal data of the user. In the personal profile section, the platforms are forced to display the IP address of the user at the time of posting, a move that has sparked heated debate among netizens and triggered a series of social phenomena.

So what is the purpose behind the mandatory display of IP affiliation? Will this matter adversely affect our privacy and security? Is the mandatory display of IP address justified? Will the exposure of IP addresses infringe our privacy rights and restrict our freedom of expression on the Internet? Can the mandatory display be replaced by informed consent?

2. SUBJECT-OBJECT ANALYSIS OF THE MANDATORY DISPLAY OF USER IP AFFILIATION

Three prerequisites are usually required to be met for the establishment of an online privacy issue, namely, the subject involved in the infringement, the content of the infringement, and the object being infringed upon.

2.1 Subjects of the Phenomenon of Forced Display of Users' IP Affiliation

Websites, enterprises, individuals, governments, etc. , may intentionally or unintentionally become the subject of infringement, which is a fact that cannot be ignored. Websites or application platforms are carriers of network information, with massive amounts of user information, and are the biggest potential beneficiaries of user privacy infringement. By obtaining user information, they can acquire user habits and make profits through accurate push, such as obtaining the user's IP address and then pushing advertisements or consulting to the user from merchants in the same city, which is a bidirectional way to make profits. Users are completely passive in this process, even in the case of unknowingly being obtained IP address privacy information, there is no way to effectively reject this tracking situation.

Assuming that we consider websites as the source of privacy issues, the urgent need for information in enterprises

is a derivative of privacy issues. Data occupies a pivotal position in enterprise information construction. In today's information society, data has become an indispensable and important part of enterprise development, and the success of market analyses and decision-making depends directly on the accuracy and reliability of the massive amounts of data on which enterprises rely. In the German Ideology Marx Engels made a profound criticism of the business society and explored its nature, they think: "It seems foolish to reduce all the various kinds of human interrelationships to a sole utilitarian relationship [1]. " Due to profit-driven moral deviation, the behaviour of business organisations has deviated from the boundaries of ethical norms, and they can easily become puppets of information, thus purchasing user IP information from Internet companies. As a result, there are heaps of spam emails, telephone harassment and website pushers in your mailbox. For example, if you travel on business, local hotels will often send you advertisement emails to your registered mailbox, and if you go to a new city and open the life software such as Meituan or Dianping, no matter whether you turn on the positioning of your mobile phone or not, it will accurately tell you your current belonging and push the nearest food, entertainment and recreation place businesses to you.

Government monitoring of user location information. Although countries have enacted regulations on online data protection, the main purpose of these regulations is to regulate the use of user data by businesses rather than targeting government behaviour. During the Xin Guan epidemic in China the government monitored people's travel tracks through IP addresses for epidemic prevention and control purposes, such as scanning health code place codes.

Individuals' invasion of others' privacy also exists, and with the continuous advancement of technology and the widespread popularisation of education, anyone may become the subject of invasion of others' privacy. For example, using the other person's IP address for hacking, obtaining personal privacy, or human flesh searching. Therefore, the current impact of publicly displaying Internet IP belongings, both in terms of information resourcing and privacy invasion, presents the dual characteristics of inevitability and contingency.

2.2 Objects of the Phenomenon of Forced Display of User IP Territories

At present, incidents of online privacy leakage occur repeatedly, and their root causes are intricate and complex, showing many different forms. For online privacy infringement incidents, we conduct in-depth analyses of the groups of objects involved, dividing them into ordinary Internet users, public figures, and groups with their own characteristics.

The largest group of users who are forced to publicly display their IP addresses are ordinary Internet users. Ordinary Internet users can express their opinions on the Internet by means of "everyone has a microphone", and the freedom and openness of the Internet and the low threshold make it easy to swim in the ocean of the Internet with only a terminal and a limited amount of Internet fees, and the threshold of participation in the Internet is getting lower and lower in the case of the provision of public free WIFI in more and more venues in the society. is getting lower and lower. If we regard the Internet as a non-essential tool, then it does not require users to provide any personal information, but the Internet has become a bridge to connect the real world, the network and the user to establish a close interactive relationship between the reality of our lives have been unable to leave the network world, daily consumption, office, learning, receiving information, none of which requires a variety of application platforms to support, and in these platforms are forced to accept the display of the IP address. On these platforms, Internet users are forced to accept that displaying their IP addresses is a dilemma that they cannot choose or change.

Public figures are the group most concerned by the mandatory display of IP affiliation. Although it is difficult to clearly define the concept of public figures, it is generally agreed in the judicial and humanities academic circles that whether they are entertainment and sports stars or political officials, public figures and other types of public figures, their privacy rights must be conceded to a certain extent. Compared with ordinary people, public figures have more abundant social resources at their disposal, and the impact of their words and deeds transcends the scope of the individual, so the scope of their privacy is very limited compared to that of the general public. In the glittering land of the entertainment industry, countless people have become high-profile celebrities overnight, and the success of celebrities in their careers has earned them lucrative salaries and huge bonuses. However, there are two sides to every story, and the price of high returns comes with high exposure. A mismatch between a public figure's notified itinerary and the account's displayed IP address is bound to affect their integrity, and the public figure's displayed IP affiliation also strengthens public surveillance and monitoring during times of epidemics due to epidemic prevention policies. Behind the display of IP address will bring a series of geographical speculation,

and a series of topics of debate.

3. ETHICAL ANALYSES OF THE PLATFORM'S MANDATORY DISPLAY OF USERS' IP AFFILIATION

3.1 Analysing the Boundary between Personal Information and Public Information based on Marxist Ethics

What the Marxist concept of ethics emphasises is the objectivity and class nature of morality and ethics, and it also points out the unique characteristic of morality as having a historical nature. From the perspective of the social-historical nature of morality, we can deeply understand the root causes of online privacy infringement.

With the advent of the information age, ethical relations have evolved from the industrial age of the past to the information age, which inevitably involves new changes in ethical relations in this new era. Network privacy, as a new type of information resource, has become a special public domain in cyberspace. With the rapid development of networks in the information age, the general perception of people's preference for freedom and sharing of information has led to the gradual expansion of the public domain of information, thus causing the traditional perception of personal privacy to gradually shift towards the boundaries of public information.

So is there legitimacy in mandating the display of IP affiliation? In October 2021, the State Internet Information Office issued the "Regulations on the Management of Internet User Account Name Information (Draft)". In this opinion in the third chapter of the Internet user account service platform, Article 12 provides that the requirements of the Internet user account service platform should be in a significant way, in the Internet user account information page to display the account IP address information. Domestic Internet user account IP address information should be marked to the province (region, city), foreign account IP address information should be marked to the country (region)[2]. As a result of this opinion draft, the current major platforms have begun to gradually display the IP address, which indicates that the source of information on the Internet is being gradually standardised, and a standardised review of the statement. Then whether displaying IP belongs to the invasion of privacy, we need to clarify whether IP address belongs to personal privacy or public information. For individuals, there is a large amount of private space and private domains on the Internet, while in public administration, these should be under the unified control of government agencies. According to the Civil Code, although IP address belongs to the category of personal information, legal experts believe that it is impossible to directly confirm the real identity of the party at the source of the information through comprehensive analyses solely on the basis of public resource information that cannot be modified by the platform. So it has some justification legally and morally. However, it cannot be denied that the disclosure of IP belonging information does expand the coverage of the original public information. Some people regard the IP address as network ID card, ID card is undoubtedly public information, but most people do not want to ID card exposure in the public platform, but also not willing to everyone has the right to query your ID card, for public officials to check ID card is also extremely resistant. And IP address and identity information is a big difference between the IP address has the variability, and identity information is consistent, IP address changes to a certain extent on behalf of the changes in the location of belonging to, there is a certain component of nationality attributes, which is the essence of the issue that will give rise to controversy.

3.2 The Relationship between the Right to Privacy and Social Responsibility

As the existence of human subjective rights, privacy has an innate quality. After entering human society, the natural person's sense of subjectivity and sense of crisis converge to become a sense of privacy, a phenomenon that marks an important turning point in the transformation of the natural person into the subject person. With the deepening of human awareness of the significance of their own existence and the advancement of the modern information revolution, the right to privacy has become increasingly prominent in reality and has become one of the important human rights. With the rapid development of science and technology represented by the Internet, society and its members have entered into a brand-new scientific and technological paradigm and humanistic and moral environment, which has also triggered a series of new political, legal and ethical issues. In this era, people also put forward higher requirements for the protection of online privacy. In today's society, cyberspace has become an indispensable second living space for human beings, which not only provides safety, security and respect, but also satisfies human beings' need for self-realisation.

From a Marxist perspective, the topic of human rights invariably revolves around the substantive issues of human

emancipation and comprehensive human development, as well as how to realise the rights of human beings and how to achieve human development through their continued emancipation. The concepts advocated by Marxism aim to promote the full and free development of human beings, which is the highest pursuit of the revolution. In the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels pointed out that "the free development of each individual is the condition for the free development of all[3]. " In *The German Ideology*, Marx put forward the concepts of "comprehensive development of the individual" and "comprehensive development of the individual". The important reason for the attraction and charm of the Internet comes from the characteristics of free sharing and the essence of respecting the individual and releasing the human nature in a comprehensive way. People can speak freely in the online world to find a piece of their own territory on the Internet, and only on the premise of recognising the uniqueness of each individual can the comprehensive development of human beings be realised. Internet users enjoy the protection of privacy and freedom of expression, but also need to fulfil certain online behavioural norms and monitoring obligations, in order to make the online world more regulated and orderly, show IP belonging to the reasonable elements, and also in the protection of our social security and property security in the Internet.

4. CONSIDERATION OF PROS AND CONS AND SOLUTIONS

After many platforms launched the function of displaying IP address, netizens felt that it was helpful in reducing certain incidents of cyber violence and rumour mongering, indicating that the mandatory display of IP address can indeed inhibit some of the unhealthy winds on the Internet to a certain extent, such as small advertisements in the comment area and online fraud information, etc. , and many of which can be easily judged by looking at the IP address. In addition, through the IP address, the user is more likely to identify some of the hot and rhythmic content, such as foreign molecules split behaviour, etc. , some of the "people in the United States, just off the plane" in the name of the marketing account will lose the survival of the soil, this type of account will not dare to rampant publication of fabricated content. Although the mandatory display of IP addresses can serve as a deterrent to these behaviours, the negative effects it brings cannot be ignored. First of all, is the "promote regional discrimination" problem, objectively speaking, the current domestic Internet platform discussion environment is not friendly, such as during the epidemic, microblogging, Zhihu, shaking tone and other platforms have seen a lot of attacks on the ordinary citizens of Shanghai, as well as Henan suffered a number of storms and other disasters in the course of the history of the process, it is not difficult to find, there are a lot of discrimination against specific regions, the number of people in the country is not the same as in the past. There are many discriminatory remarks against specific geographical areas, which will not only lead to the amplification effect of online public opinion on the unfair evaluation and social injustice in certain places, but also cause the public to have a negative impact on the image and credibility of the local government. Assuming that in some future disaster, if local residents carry IP addresses of their hometowns and try to speak out for their hometowns, they may face more targeted and intensive cyber violence. Similarly, would ordinary users who are truly "overseas" but have their country at heart be an easier target for cyber violence? It is also important to note that mandatory display of IP addresses is only a symptomatic but not a permanent solution to the problem of polluting the online environment, which can be easily solved by means of IP address proxies. Therefore, the mandatory display of IP affiliation is still mainly aimed at people who intend to make profits through lies and packaging in the Internet society, of course, for most of the ordinary netizens does play a protective role, but also play a deterrent role in the Internet this big pool with the mandatory display of IP affiliation of this "big pumping machine" soon! Can see clearly who in the end is "skinny dipping", in short, the benefits outweigh the disadvantages.

Given the fragmented and unfocused provisions of China's laws on the protection of the privacy of IP addresses, which lack comprehensiveness and implementation, it is difficult to establish a legal framework for the protection of the right to privacy in the online environment. In particular, there is a lack of direct legal provisions to apply and effectively punish cyber violence and human flesh searches resulting from the exposure of IP addresses, as well as criminal acts resulting from the counterfeiting or proxying of IP addresses. At present, China is in the process of transitioning from a large Internet country to a strong Internet country, and there is an obvious lag between the legal research and protection of online privacy infringement issues and the development of network technology. If the mandatory display of IP affiliation is the obligation of network users, then the protection of network users' right to privacy and security is the responsibility of the national judiciary and network security law enforcement agencies, network privacy infringement and the determination of responsibility is still in a relatively ambiguous state, so China involves personal privacy protection and security normative rule of law construction needs to be further improved and perfected.

Now the major application platform in the user registration need to click to confirm the user service agreement, but few users seriously read, and carefully check the privacy terms, this agreement as if the platform's death warrant,

the responsibility transferred to the user, there is legitimacy but unreasonable, so the mandatory display of the IP belongs to the network platform needs to establish a complete and systematic informing procedures and relief procedures. For example, when registering for an account on the platform, users should be informed and asked for consent in a prominent way, and once users feel the infringement of their privacy in the process of using the platform, they should open a relief procedure to safeguard the security of their privacy. When the mandatory display of IP addresses exposes users to cyber violence or geographic discrimination, the platform is required to penalise the perpetrators and clean up inappropriate comments and other forms of protection. Platforms and judicial authorities should firmly prohibit IP address proxies and prosecute them according to the law.

For the largest group of guests who are forced to display their IP affiliation, the most effective way to safeguard one's right to privacy and network security is to develop good Internet operating habits. In the public network, do not easily disclose information related to personal privacy, even if you have to register and submit, should be cleaned up immediately after processing. Before enjoying the goods or services provided by network service enterprises and other subjects, network users should establish a firm sense of rights protection, read the privacy terms and conditions carefully and exercise the right of "informed consent" in a careful and substantive manner, in conjunction with the protection of their legitimate rights and interests. In the virtual world of the Internet should pay attention to their own words and deeds, civilised language, to avoid becoming a victim of Internet violence and away from all Internet crimes.

While the mandatory display of IP affiliation can certainly deter some people with evil intentions and ill will, it cannot completely eliminate Internet chaos, so there is still a lot of effort to be made if you want to get a fresher Internet environment.

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