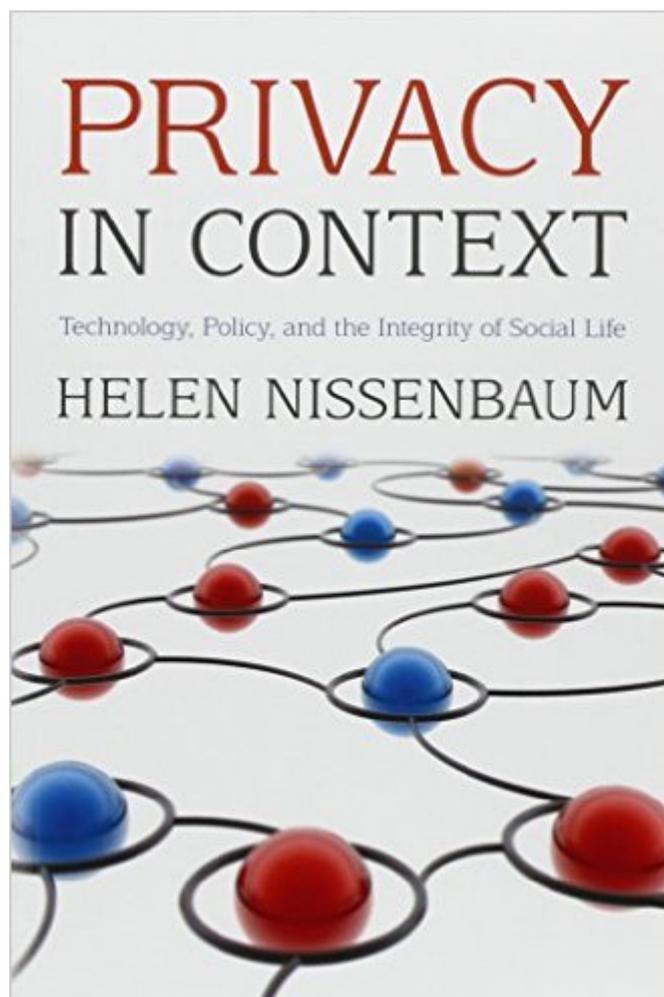# Privacy In Context: Technology, Policy, And The Integrity Of Social Life (Stanford Law Books)

Synopsis

Privacy is one of the most urgent issues associated with information technology and digital media. This book claims that what people really care about when they complain and protest that privacy has been violated is not the act of sharing information itself—most people understand that this is crucial to social life —but the inappropriate, improper sharing of information.Arguing that privacy concerns should not be limited solely to concern about control over personal information, Helen Nissenbaum counters that information ought to be distributed and protected according to norms governing distinct social contexts—whether it be workplace, health care, schools, or among family and friends. She warns that basic distinctions between public and private, informing many current privacy policies, in fact obscure more than they clarify. In truth, contemporary information systems should alarm us only when they function without regard for social norms and values, and thereby weaken the fabric of social life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

We have a right to privacy, but it is neither a right to control nor a right to access our own personal information. Instead, it is a right to an "appropriate flow of personal information." Opposite most defenses of privacy in the modern world, Nissenbaum dismisses any conversation about the hazards of private information in the public sphere. In fact, in her book, "Privacy in Context: Technology, Policy, and the Integrity of Social Life", Helen Nissenbaum tries to abolish the

public/private dichotomy, instead stressing the importance of social norms in dictating how information is shared.Nissenbaum studied philosophy from bachelors to doctoral, ending up a professor at New York University where she specializes in the philosophy and politics at technology. She laid the foundation for contextual privacy that the Federal Trade Comission has now begun to champion (http://www.ftc.gov/reports/preliminary-ftc-staff-report-protecting-consumer-privacy-era-rapid-change-proposed-framework). She continues to influence governmental and scientific bodies alike, lecturing on her contextual approach to privacy monthly.But on to the book itself. Nissenbaum does not write to the casual readerâ "she takes an idea, dissects it, analyzes from several angles (usually citing other philosophers), slowly recreates the original intent in a new light, then masterfully summarizes it in her own way. The book is split into three partsâ "the first, which I found to be the most engaging section, was a keen description on how information technology has changed the way privacy can be violated. The second remains purely theoretical, describing alternate approaches to privacy and beginning Nissenbaumâ ™s attack on the public/private dichotomy.

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