

Nowhere To Flee, Everywhere I Go, As Secretive As I Can Be, All Eyes On Me

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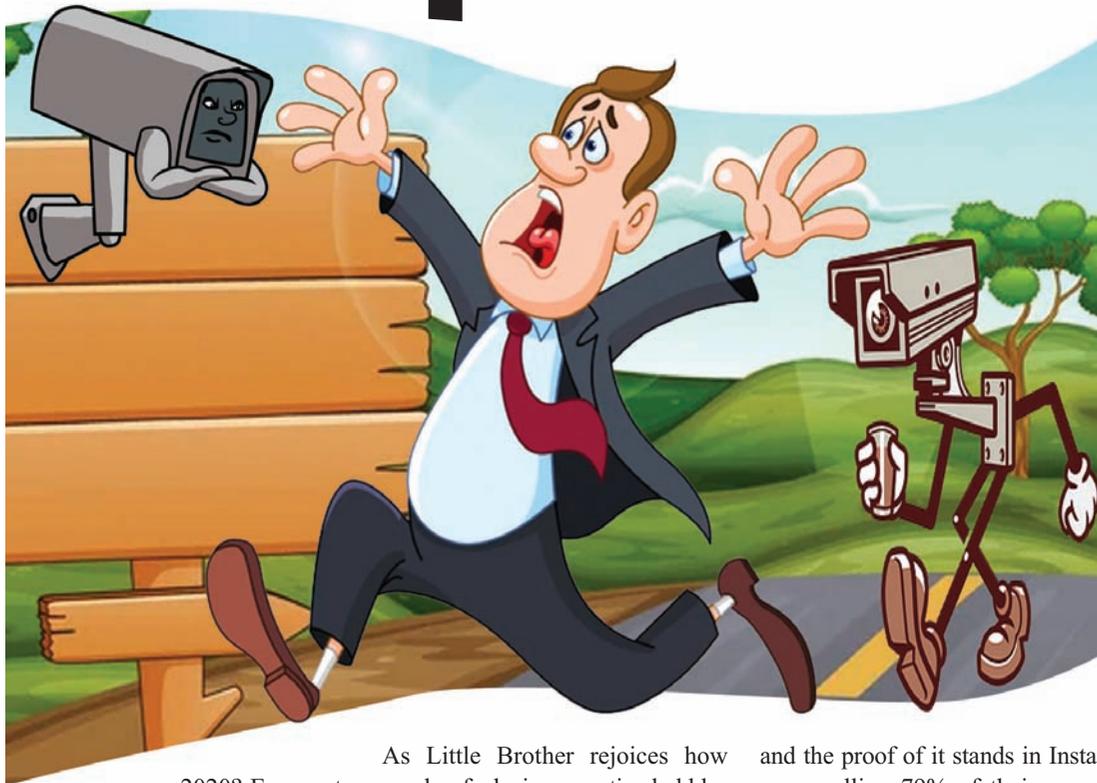
Little Brother wakes up and grabs his phone, willing to open the eye that watches him through the device. On the screen, an ad appears; “I was just telling my friend yesterday I haven’t had this snack in a while and here it is! How convenient!”

And convenience is key in a world where everyone needs everything handed to them, but what we often forget is that for these aids to fit our requirements just right, we need to be constantly studied. So, welcome to a modern society where total surveillance surrounds us. With promises of ultimate security, extraordinary experiences, and a holistic life, Little Brother, looking back at all the eyes watching him, asks – are you troublesome yet?

As Little Brother gets out of bed, the camera outside his window zooms in on him. He waves it a hello. “After all, it’s here for my own safety. I’m being observed so I can be protected.”

Watched we are, but it is for our own betterment. Countless crimes were stopped before they could even take place, simply out of fear of being recorded. Should anyone step out of line, evidence is available to deliver justice – CCTV cameras have reduced roadway crime by 24% and train station crime by 28%. More recently, the way we dealt with COVID-19 would have been unheard of a decade ago. Remember Aarogya Setu, downloaded 150 million times just by October

Pixel paranoia



2020? Even outside of danger, cameras in daycares, nursing homes, offices etc., can be of great use. Some cry that Big Brother is always watching us, but is that really a bad thing?

With the house feeling a little too silent, Little Brother, as he gets ready for the day, feels himself grow sad. “I hate living alone.” Poor Little Brother did not know that this was simply not the case. Every piece of tech he owned – they were all with him, watching, listening, all day, every day.

As Little Brother rejoices how much safer he is, a question bubbles out – “To what extent am I under surveillance?” Well, presently, we inhabit a digital network of multiple surveillance tools: facial recognition, location tracking, internet monitoring, and social media analytics. For instance, some Samsung TVs reportedly have a baked-in ‘feature’ that listens to the consumers’ conversations without their consent. Not to forget the 2016 elections in USA where 50 million leaked Facebook profiles were used for targeted advertising. All this also results in mass manipulation,

and the proof of it stands in Instagram selling 79% of their users’ data to third parties and Facebook 57% (reported by pCloud), which leads to 80% of the feed being filled with promoted content. With such figures, just how much privacy are we willing to barter when our every click is so meticulously tracked?

Little Brother stands in the kitchen, pouring cereal, as a chill runs down his spine. “Is anyone there? I swear I felt someone watching me,” but where are they? Who is watching him?

“It’s me, hi! I’m the problem, it’s

me” turns out to be a little too accurate in the case of surveillance. The carefully chosen ads that exploit our online experiences shape our choices, making it difficult to tell whether the purchase is because of freewill or psychological coercion. And let’s not miss how our information is even mined for questionable reasons. All of this screams an invasion of privacy to a devastating level, and the results are just as harrowing – increased feelings of vulnerability, anxiety, and distrust. Imagine Little Brother having to censor his own thoughts out of fear of surveillance. After being surrounded by tools built from the ground up to spy information, he, and the rest of us, cry – who can we really trust?

Surrounded by technology, Little Brother realises that his own trusted tools are the watchful eyes he constantly feels on him. Nonetheless, he is determined. “No, I will not get rid of my devices. The influence of my gadgets is determined by how I use them.”

Little Brother’s approach seems the most logical one. The same surveillance tools that fuel targeted advertising can be relied on to boost data security with encryption techniques, anonymisation processes, and decentralised data storage. As the world continues to become an open book, billions of Little Brothers come together on both sides of the debate and battle out if a harmony can be struck between personal freedom and constant vigilance. In such an argument, which side are you on? 🇮🇳

THE GT POLL

Can sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) help in reducing the colossal carbon footprint created by the aviation industry?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Can’t say

To vote, checkout our Instagram page @the_global_times

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Cultivate a safe haven
In conversation with Dr Neha Sharma, senior manager, content & curriculum at NGO Arpan, also a jury member at Youth Power 2022-23.

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What’s inside



Under the sea
Exploring the ethereal and enigmatic species that have made their home in the underwater world of the Mariana Trench.

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Empowering seniors
Have a look at experts discussing the vital topic of helping the elderly as part of the panel discussion organised by YP team of AIS Gur 43 (2022-23).

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POLL RESULT
for GT Edition April 15, 2024

As 40% of students struggle to find placement across IITs, what do you think is the reason for the same?

Low paying job offers	27%
Increase in batch sizes	44%
Tech industry slowdown	29%

Result as on April 20, 2024