

Proposition of correction

1. Compréhension de l'écrit

The protection of users' online data raises questions that are tackled by the two articles under study. While La Presse Canadienne, in an article from August 2023, showcases that some countries, spearheaded by Canada, are fighting to counter massive online data collection, the BBC article published in March 2026 reveals that privacy is a dying concept. So what is being done to safeguard users' information from being harvested?

La Presse Canadienne reports that Canada's Commission for Privacy Protection, along with the UK, Australia and China, have set frameworks to protect users' online information from being collected in bulk from social media companies' websites. They seek to ensure that companies like YouTube, TikTok or Instagram abide by these measures so they can take mitigate the risks. The BBC journalist explains that companies are aware of said risks- since they have implemented online privacy tools like password managers or VPNs- but doubts their efficiency.

The protection of online privacy isn't seen as paramount by all, the BBC article reveals. Indeed, the younger generations think that online privacy simply doesn't exist. A 25-year-old analyst considers his private data as currency in return for online services and a 2024 Cisco survey highlighted that only 38% of the respondents take steps to protect their private information online, while only 44% of Americans read the fine print before accepting the privacy settings. For the experts interviewed in La Presse Canadienne and the BBC, this poses serious threats to freedom of expression and therefore democracy.

242 words

2. Expression écrite

1. Is government surveillance the price to pay for citizens' security?

In a society with war on its doorstep, many governments seek to expand their surveillance capabilities, arguing that such measures are essential to prevent terrorism and serious crime. Citizens are asked to accept some forms of government monitoring, in exchange for safety. But is increased government surveillance an unavoidable price for ensuring citizens' security?

Government surveillance is often justified as a pragmatic response to real and shifting dangers and citizens are asked to accept some level of surveillance in exchange for a sense of security. It is the case in France, with the Vigipirate national alert system, whereby extra police patrol the streets, but citizens need to open their bags and go through metal detector gates everytime they want to visit a museum. In the United Kingdom, legislation such as the Investigatory Powers Act has broadened authorities' ability to monitor communications. From this perspective, surveillance can enhance national security by allowing governments to act proactively in an increasingly digital and interconnected world.

However, these benefits come with substantial ethical and political concerns and depend on the level of surveillance that citizens are requested to undergo. The disclosures by Edward Snowden revealed that U.S. programs like PRISM frequently involved mass data collection, extending far beyond targeted individuals, and without their knowledge or consent, highlighting worries about insufficient oversight and potential abuse of power. Such practices risk eroding civil liberties, damaging public trust, and disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups, like the Uighurs in China.

241 words

2. Richard Serra said « If something is free, then you are the product ». Do you agree ?

Richard Serra's statement that "if something is free, [we] are the product" offers a scathing comment on today's digital economy and leads us to think about the personal cost of the services that we use on a daily basis. It also seems like a very ironic and maybe even cynical view of today's world. Is there really nothing free left?

Richard Serra's statement captures a central dynamic of the digital economy, with tech platforms dominating everyday life. In the United States, companies like Facebook and Google offer free services while collecting vast amounts of user data to sell targeted advertising. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, users of platforms such as Instagram or TikTok exchange personal information—knowingly or not—for access to social connectivity and entertainment. In this sense, Serra's claim holds considerable weight: users are not paying with money, but with their data, attention, and behavioral patterns, which are monetized by corporations.

However, the statement is not universally applicable and risks oversimplifying complex relationships between users and services. Regulations and public awareness campaigns have begun to push back against unchecked data exploitation, emphasizing consent and transparency. Moreover, many free services provide genuine value, from educational resources to communication tools, without always reducing users to mere commodities. Public broadcasters like the BBC, funded through taxation rather than advertising, offer another model where "free" access does not rely on commodifying personal data.

While Serra's observation is often accurate in highlighting exploitative aspects of digital capitalism, it should be understood as a caution rather than an absolute truth. 242 words