[OPT-OUT]

Intimate relationships became redefined in our information age. One intimate relationship that emerged is between us and the web. Trust is an essential factor for a relationship to be considered intimate. We trusted the internet. Not only we felt safe providing personal information but also we were comfortable being our true selves - privately. We search, browse, like, spend time looking at posts and ignore others. We click “I agree”, “sign in with Facebook”, and “sign in with Gmail” out of convenience and trust that our data is always somewhere safe. This level of intimacy in our relationship with our digital devices became deeper than our relationship with each other. With our browsing data we created a unique secret garden on the web that holds our curiosities, desires and insecurities. We developed a digital finger print that is being sold and used against us.

Without our consent, we became prey to the advertising companies that tracked our personal and behavioral data. Every conscious and unconscious decision we made on the web became a detrimental attribute associated to our likes and dislikes. Advertisers use all the aggregate data to orchestrate a whole new shopping experience through personalized advertisements. Some ads can be subtle as they blend into the content of web pages. Others are more aggressive in their presence and interrupt our web experience if only for 15 seconds before giving us access to the content.

Aside from the frequency of the ads, the urgency here lies in their content. An ad about a shirt that follows us around the web each time we open a new window or tab does not raise as many red flags as a birth control advertisement. Without our knowledge, online advertisers have taken the liberty to use health information to try to sell us products and services about our physical and mental wellbeing.

We, the internet users, did not opt in.
We were not given a choice.
We refuse to be the ants getting observed under the magnifying glass of trackers as we browse the web.
We refuse to have our sensitive personal data monetized by advertising companies.

There’s an urgency now more than ever to rewire the infrastructure of the advertising technology.

We demand transparency.
Transparency about what data is being tracked.
Transparency about how our data is being used.
Transparency about where our data lives.

Until then,
We Opt Out.