

individual can be singled out from the crowd and contacted, messaged, located or targeted in some way, then privacy harms like discrimination, stalking, market exclusion, manipulation or misinformation can be done to them.

So being ‘not identifiable’ is no longer a suitable proxy for ‘not suffering privacy harm’. Yet our privacy laws are drafted as if the *identifiability* of a human is still an appropriate threshold, beyond which the law will not apply.

Too much intrusive online tracking, surveillance and targeting is currently escaping regulatory scrutiny. The companies responsible often say “oh but it’s not personal information because we don’t know the real identity of these people we’re targeting, so we don’t need to comply with the privacy laws”. This online surveillance has significant effects not only on privacy but social cohesion and the maintenance of public trust in our democratic institutions.

It shouldn’t matter whether or not someone’s ‘identity’ is known or knowable in a legal sense; if privacy harms can be done to that individual, then privacy protections should apply.

So, the one thing that I am super passionate about is recognising and fixing this problem within the legislation. If I had a magic wand and could fix one thing about privacy law, I would make sure that the threshold definition of ‘personal information’ or ‘personal data’, in privacy laws around the world, incorporated not only individuals who are identifiable, but also who can be singled out to a degree that facilitates their tracking, profiling or targeting.

KATIE: The 2023 International Women's Day campaign theme is #EmbraceEquity. What does this mean to you and how would you suggest this is implemented in our readers' work and personal lives?

ANNA: In my field we hear a lot about designing ‘ethical’ or ‘fair’ technology, but too often that is treated as if all you need to be ethical is to be transparent and not actively discriminate.

To me, embracing equity means delving deeper into understanding how things are, how they should be, and what is needed to get us there. It’s about aiming for something better than just ‘fairness’ in the design of technologies, systems, laws and institutions – instead it’s about actively seeking to achieve public benefit outcomes, promoting diversity and inclusion.

I believe it is important for critical thinkers to ask, of any technology, system, law or institution: Is this really serving us? Who will use this, and who will be affected by it? Who benefits from it? Who designed it? Whose experience was included, and whose was excluded? And how should we craft the rules around it, to make sure that it is fit for purpose: responsive to the needs of all affected individuals, accessible and accountable to the community?

KATIE: If you could have dinner with any woman – living or passed, real or fictional, who would it be and why?

ANNA: Jane Austen would be brilliant company, don’t you think? Imagine her skewering of insta-influencers.

KATIE: How do you unplug from work?

ANNA: Swimming is my go-to activity to unwind.

KATIE: What advice would you give to the next generation of female leaders in the industry?

ANNA: Lawyers and advisers need to stay abreast of the legislative landscape as well as emerging technologies and shifts in community attitudes. Being a good advisor means understanding not just the law, but how to help clients integrate legal and ethical principles into their business.

Read widely, engage with others, learn from experts across multiple fields, listen – and then back yourself.