Big Data and Privacy: A Review on the Effectiveness of Current Data Privacy Protection Strategies

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Nov, 2023

Abstract

This article critically examines the effectiveness of data privacy protection strategies amidst the rise of big data. As large-scale data collection provides invaluable insights, it concurrently poses significant privacy concerns. Our review categorizes protective measures into three main strategies, including data mining and anonymity, education and legal protection, as well as identifying and addressing data breaches. In summary, the reviewed strategies represent significant efforts in addressing the complex interaction between big data utilization and personal privacy issues. Although progress has been made in each strategy, there are still inherent challenges that require sustained attention and innovation. The dynamic pattern of big data requires a multifaceted approach that combines technological, educational, and regulatory measures to strike a balance between obtaining data benefits and protecting privacy.

Key words: Data mining, Data anonymization, Policy protection, Identifying attack, Action taking

1 Introduction

With the advent of the digital age, people's lives have changed thoroughly. Humankind uses big data to shape their societies, economies, and even cultures. Also, analyzing big data can provide a company or organization with superior insights to discover better business opportunities. Big data also plays a huge role in research, healthcare, media, government, and other fields. In healthcare,

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for example, the application of health information technology allows healthcare organizations to store, share, and analyze personal healthcare and biomedical data. Examples include electronic health records and genomic data, as in Xiang, Cai, et al. (2021)[1]. Supported by health informatics and technical analysis, health data can support clinical decisions and extract medical knowledge, such as about diseases and genetics, to improve the healthcare experience and reduce healthcare costs [1]. However, as the type and amount of information collected increases, some problems have emerged, such as big data breaches. In this society which heavily relies on the Internet, people's privacy is at stake.

On the Internet, human personal information involves a wide range of information, including name, identity card number, telephone, address, account passwords, property status, whereabouts and trajectory. For example, using some apps requires real-name authentication, and using map-based software leaves a footprint. On June 1, 2010, the implementation of the new Facebook privacy policy sparked protests that involved the social networking site with potentially 500 million users, but most users did not participate in the protests and continued to use Facebook. The reason for the day's protests was that Facebook Inc. executives changed privacy laws after the Wall Street Journal cited examples of Facebook users' personal information being shared with advertisers without the users' consent, and subsequently questioned Facebook's security. Yet these new policies make users' privacy even less secure, as in Waters and Ackerman (2011) [2]. The Facebook privacy breach illustrates that data breach risks are sometimes simply unpredictable. Information technology is evolving too quickly, with too many changes and too many applications, and failure to exercise caution can result in significant risks. Although this information is stored on different servers, the ownership of this data should belong to the user's assets, which must be clear.

As people's social activities have gradually shifted to social platforms like Facebook, these platforms have accumulated a huge amount of data. Advances in database technology and hardware levels have enabled the preservation of this data. However, data mining in social networks can lead to the disclosure of sensitive personal information. Many privacy-preserving techniques have been proposed to improve security and privacy protection in social networks. Du and Pi (2022) proved that the easiest way to implement this technique is to hide only the user's identity and not process any other information [3]. However, malicious actors may still identify individuals through background knowledge, leading to privacy breaches. Therefore, it is crucial to protect user privacy and security during the data mining process. To solve these problems, the first approach proposed in this paper is a data mining algorithm-based user privacy data protection strategy. This algorithm is able to decompose the data, reconstruct the features, and store the data vertically in order to effectively protect the data from security threats while maintaining data anonymity. This approach helps to protect the user's identity from private information leakage and maintains data availability [3]. The second data privacy protection strategy is to make people morally aware of the importance and necessity of protecting others' personal information by emphasizing in education and publicity the serious adverse effects of violating others' data privacy on social health and cohesion as well as social norms [4]. Through the enactment of laws to maintain the security of other people's data information becomes a social rule, so that people's behavior is more inclined to protect the privacy of other people's data and reduce the leakage of other people's information data. Identifying attacks or breaches of private data and taking punitive action is the rationale behind the third approach [5]. When a single individual uses the automatic data mining technology for large data with rich combination and high correlation degree, by linking the records of different types of data sets of the individual mining information, people can finally accurately find the source of the attack. In this case, it is feasible to impose legal sanctions on the attacker or the leak and reduce such attacks or leaks [6,7,8].

The purpose of big data and privacy is a complex topic that revolves around the balance between utilizing the tremendous potential of big data for various applications while ensuring the protection of individual privacy rights. Big data refers to the vast volume of structured and unstructured data collected by organizations for various purposes, including improving business operations, making informed decisions, conducting research, and enhancing user experiences. Through big data analytics, valuable insights, patterns, and trends can be uncovered across diverse fields. However, alongside its significant benefits exist notable privacy concerns. The collection and analysis of large amounts of data have the potential to reveal sensitive and personal information about individuals. This information can be used to infer personal preferences, and behaviors, and even predict future actions—posing a potential threat to individual privacy. In this review, we will discuss the effectiveness of current data privacy protection strategies in the context of big data.

2 DATA MINING AND ANONYMITY

In this section, we aim to introduce the method of data mining and anonymity. As data mining algorithms delve into the intricacies of massive datasets to extract valuable insights, it is imperative to establish robust privacy protection policies that safeguard individual rights while enabling meaningful analysis. These strategies offer a strong foundation for privacy preservation; they must be continually refined and adapted to address emerging challenges and advancements in data mining technology.

2.1 Data Anonymization

This is one of the fundamental principles of user privacy protection. This involves removing or encrypting personally identifiable information (PII) from the dataset, making it impossible to identify individuals directly. Anonymizing the data significantly reduces the risk of re-identification, ensuring the user's privacy is preserved, as in Sahin and Dogru, 2023. However, Ni et al. (2022) proved that it is essential to note that complete anonymization is often challenging, as it may compromise the utility of the data for meaningful analysis [10]. Striking the right balance between privacy and utility is a crucial consideration in implementing an adequate privacy protection policy. This involves meticulous attention of the techniques and methods hired to de-identify data whilst maintaining its analytical importance. Applying K-anonymity strategies achieves over 90% record anonymization while retaining information safety, as in Weng and Chi (2021).

2.2 Informed Consent

A cornerstone of this policy is the principle of informed consent. Benchoufi and Ravaud (2017) proved that users should have complete information on how their information could be used and shared before presenting their consent. 80% of users are willing to share their details while provided with correct information [12].Organizations need to elaborate on their data mining practices, the types of data accumulated, the purpose of the data analysis, and any potential dangers.Obtaining explicit user consent ensures transparency and empowers individuals to make informed decisions about sharing their data.It is essential to provide users with the option to choose out or withdraw their consent at any time, giving them manipulation over their private data.

2.3 Data Minimization

Furthermore, data minimization is a crucial precept in user privacy safety. This principle advocates for gathering and maintaining only the minimum amount of data vital for the supposed analysis. By minimizing the collection of unnecessary information, the risk of privacy breaches or misuse of information is reduced. It also aligns with the motive predicament, in which data must be used most effectively for the precise functions disclosed to the users throughout the consent practice. Data retention intervals need to be defined, and information should be securely deleted once it is not required for evaluation. Implementing these practices ensures that private data is not stored indefinitely, minimizing the danger because of data breaches or unauthorized entry to it.

2.4 Secure Data Handling

Lastly, secure data storage and transmission strategies are vital in data mining algorithms. Organizations should use encryption techniques to shield private data at rest and in transit. According to a study by the James and Rabbi (2023) , encryption can lessen the probability of a data breach by up to 90% [13]. This is because encrypted data are appreciably harder to get admission to and decipher, making it a much less attractive goal for cybercriminals. This ensures that although the information is intercepted or accessed without authorization, it remains unreadable and unusable. Additionally, Clifton and Marks (1996) proved that admission to controls and authentication mechanisms should be applied to limit private data access only to authorized individuals who have a valid reason to access the data. Regular safety audits and vulnerability checks must be performed to discover and cope with any potential weaknesses within the system [14].

2.5 Case Studies

2.5.1 Retaining privacy inside cellular social networks.

To illustrate the practical usage of the user privacy safety approach, we shall explore various case studies from recent research. In the research by Du and Pi (2022), they delve into the intricacies of retaining privacy inside cellular social networks [3]. They spotlight the significance of records anonymization in safeguarding users' sensitive data. By applying k-anonymity or differential privacy strategies, the researchers reveal how companies can extract precious insights from social community records without compromising individuals' identities. This method guarantees that the statistics mining process respects user privacy while taking into account significant evaluation.

2.5.2 Information-driven software for healthcare and GDPR

Similarly, Gruschka et al. (2018) contribute to the discourse on privacy protection through looking into the consequences of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on large data processing [15]. The GDPR emphasizes ideas with informed consent, data minimization, and purpose limitation to ensure user privacy in data processing activities. Gruschka et al. Present a case analysis of an information-driven software within the healthcare domain, in which they emphasize the significance of transparent facts collection practices and the necessity of obtaining explicit consumer consent. By aligning their data processing activities with GDPR principles, the researchers exhibit a practical implementation of a user privacy safety policy in compliance with regulatory frameworks.

2.6 Limitations and Future Directions

While the outlined user privacy safety policy offers a complete framework for responsible records mining, some barriers to future exploration must be acknowledged. One limitation is the inherent tension between information usage and privacy preservation. Striking the right balance calls for ongoing research and innovation in privacy-keeping techniques, such as advanced anonymization techniques and differential privacy mechanisms as in Schermer (2011) [16]. For example, in the case of data anonymization, overly competitive techniques can lead to a loss of data utility, thus hampering the effectiveness of analysis. Balancing this trade-off requires sophisticated methods that preserve privacy without doing away with the meaningfulness of results.

Additionally, the strategy predominantly focuses on technical and organizational factors of user privacy protection. However, the human factor remains a critical measurement. User education and awareness play a pivotal role in ensuring effective implementation. As such, future instructions ought to invent new strategies to enhance people's understanding of data mining practices, the consequences of sharing private records, and the options available for privacy management. Designing user-friendly interfaces and providing clear, concise records concerning private data processing can empower users to make knowledgeable decisions about their data.

Lastly, as the global regulatory landscape changes, corporations must remain vigilant in aligning their practices with emerging data safety frameworks. The evolution of legal guidelines and guidelines, including new privacy guidelines or updates to existing ones, should be established and formulated. Staying knowledgeable about legal tendencies and interacting with legal experts can help navigate the problematic maze of data privacy compliance.

3 EDUCATION AND ESTABLISHING LEGEL PROTECTION

3.1 Necessity of Privacy Protection

With the vigorous development of computers and the continuous rise of the service manufacturing industry, personal privacy data such as social media accounts, credit card records, location information, browser history, disease history and other personal privacy data have been given more commercial value as a form of information, and a series of illegal behaviors have been spawned to violate the privacy data of others. In this case, it is obviously not binding to improve the importance of protecting others' privacy through education so that people can consciously protect others' data privacy. Therefore, the protection of data privacy requires not only education, but also the establishment of relevant laws and enforcement measures.

3.2 How Policy Protection Works

By establishing relevant laws and regulations for data privacy protection, personal privacy data can be more secure and standardized. These laws and regulations generally set out the obligations and responsibilities of organizations and businesses when processing personal data, including clear notification of the purpose for which personal data is collected, obtaining explicit consent, implementing data security measures, restricting data transfers, etc. Specifically, for instance, the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (2016) (GDPR) [17] requires organizations to comply with a series of regulations when processing the personal data of EU residents or face potentially significant fines. China's Personal Information Protection Law (2016) [18], which came into effect in 2016, requires organizations and enterprises to abide by basic principles, clarify the purpose and legal basis, and protect individual rights in the processing of personal data.

3.3 Effectiveness and Advantages

The effectiveness of protecting the privacy of personal data through laws and regulations lies in that the introduction of privacy protection laws and regulations makes personal data processors assume more responsibilities and obligations at the legal level and strengthen the protection of personal data. These laws and regulations provide strong legal protection for individuals and effectively protect their privacy rights. In addition, for violations of laws and regulations, regulators are also able to punish and sanction them, further strengthening the effectiveness of regulations.

3.4 Limitations of Laws

Based on the *International Data Privacy Principles* (Zankl, 2014) (IDPPs) [19] that establish data privacy policies, operational standards and mitigation measures, the implementation of personal data protection through laws and regulations inevitably presents two major problems.

3.4.1 No Corresponding Relevant Law

Due to the rapid development of information technology, more and more types and quantities of intensive databases and complex information lists are being produced. Meanwhile, the corresponding illegal and criminal behaviors or methods such as data leakage, data theft and data tampering are also being updated rapidly. Traditional legal solutions could be embarrassed without relevant laws [20]. Finally, this strategy loses its effectiveness. Due to the lag of legal solutions and the instantaneous violation of data privacy, the strategy of relying entirely on laws and regulations is challenging in the current situation where anti-privacy invasion technology is not developed.

3.4.2 Differences in Laws

Another difficulty mentioned by Cheng and Zankl lies in the geographical differences in privacy protection policies [20]. First of all, regional differences and cultural differences make people in different regions have different definitions of privacy (Take personal income as an example, in southern China, personal income is often regarded as a higher level of personal privacy, while in northern China, it is the opposite). This leads many people to inadvertently disclose their private information to outsiders, and the European region has the highest incidence of such problems. In addition, in the book *Differential Privacy* (Dwork, 2006) [21], it is pointed out that when exploring how to protect data privacy security, it is of practical significance to understand what constitutes privacy and why it becomes privacy: Only by knowing what privacy is, can we introduce relevant laws and regulations and design protective measures more targeted. Data privacy protection policies also differ greatly under the framework of different legal systems in different regions, which is reflected in the difference of legal process and result judgment, which provides potential opportunities for cross-regional data infringement and attack, increases the possibility and potential success rate of data crime, and poses a huge threat to the property security of individuals or organizations.

3.5 Case study: Yahoo Data Breaches

In terms of data subject rights, different laws have different tendencies in granting individual rights. For instance, GDPR [17] emphasizes individuals' rights to access and delete their data, while California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) [22] focuses more on giving individuals the right to sell and share their data. In terms of penalties, GDPR imposes heavy penalties on individuals or organizations, often resulting in high fines, while laws such as Personal Data Protection Art(PDPA) [23] and Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Art(PIPEDA) [24] impose small penalties or do not impose penalties. Because people in different regions are granted different rights on data subject rights and the penalties are different under different laws, data infringement may be carried out by changing forms and avoiding legal constraints. For example, the buying and selling of other people's data occurs more often in places where the right to trade in other people's data is not given or specified. This shows that the premise of protecting data privacy through laws is that the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of laws and regulations are guaranteed; otherwise, data crimes can still be implemented in cross-regional and cross-system ways and evade legal punishment.

Between 2013 and 2014, Yahoo experienced two data breaches that resulted in billions of users' account information being compromised. The breaches involved unauthorized access to sensitive personal information, including names, email addresses, phone numbers and Yahoo passwords, among others. These incidents have raised questions about cybersecurity practices, incident response, and disclosure requirements in the different regions where Yahoo operates. Questions have also been raised about whether Yahoo's regional carriers are strictly adhering to their respective privacy policies.

4 IDENTIFYING ATTACKS OR BREACHES OF PRIVATE DATA AND TAKING PUNITIVE ACTION

4.1 Background

Identifying attacks or breaches of private data and taking punitive action is the rationale behind the third approach. This strategy focuses on detecting unauthorized access, breaches, or malicious activities involving personal data and subsequently imposing penalties or consequences on the responsible parties. Du and Pi, 2022 proved that the goal is to discourage improper use of data and create a deterrent against privacy violations [3]. It is important to note that while punitive actions are a vital component of data privacy protection, they should accompany proactive measures to prevent breaches and promote a strong security culture. The effectiveness of this strategy depends on a combination of technology, legal frameworks, and the collective commitment to upholding data privacy rights.

4.2 List of Two Methods of Preserving Privacy

Based on the study, they can list two methods of preserving privacy by identifying attacks or breaches of private data and taking punitive action. Firstly, data provenance. In information science, the historical object is a piece of data, and data provenance refers to the information that helps determine the derivation history of the data, starting from the source as in Xu et al. (2014) [25]. The source of the data is two types of information: the ancestor data evolved from the current data, and the transformation of the ancestor data is applied to help generate the existing data. People can better understand the data and judge its credibility with this information. Researchers have developed approaches for information provenance in semantic and social media. They are designing two approaches to seek the provenance of information. Xu et al. (2014) proved that one approach utilizes network information to seek the provenance of information directly, and the other aims to find the reverse flows of information propagation [25]—secondly, web information credibility. Due to the lack of publication barriers, low dissemination costs, and lax quality control, the credibility of online information has become a severe problem. Xu et al. (2014) convinced that with the rapid growth of online social media, false information breeds more easily and spreads more widely, further increasing the difficulty of judging information credibility [25]. The above issues should be further studied in future research, not only because they can help decision-makers feel the credibility of data mining results but also because they can constrain the sender's behavior, thereby reducing the possibility of mining result distortion.

There are still other methods of preserving privacy in big data, such as continuous monitoring, intrusion detection systems, anomaly detection, incident response teams, data loss prevention systems, forensic analysis, legal and regulatory framework, penalties and sanctions, transparency and reporting, deterrence effect, public awareness, international cooperation. These all are some details of these methods that expand to different specific points related to other areas and fields, and the next part will include some cases, which are Equifax data breach and Cambridge Analytica data scandal.

4.3 Case Study

4.3.1 Equifax Data Breach

The first case study is the Equifax data breach. Equifax is one of the three major credit reporting agencies in the United States. In 2017, the company suffered significant data breaches, leaking sensitive personal and financial information of approximately 143 million people, including social security numbers, birth dates, addresses, and credit card details as in Zou et al. (2018) [26]. Equifax detected a remote data breach, investigated the breach to solve it, and suffered a significant consequence to their reputation and credentials. Organizations must cultivate a culture of data privacy awareness and continuously improve security practices to prevent similar breaches. This violation highlights the importance of effective data privacy protection strategies and the necessity of taking strong measures to address violations. Wang and Johnson (2018) proved that it emphasizes the importance of proactive security measures, transparent breach response, regulatory compliance, and the role of punitive actions in holding organizations accountable for safeguarding private data in the era of big data [27].

4.3.2 Cambridge Analytica Data Scandal

The second case study is the Cambridge Analytica data scandal. Cambridge Analytica was a political consulting firm that gained access to and improperly used the personal data of millions of Facebook users without their consent. Peruzzi et al. (2018) convinced that the scandal highlighted data misuse for influencing political campaigns and raised concerns about privacy and ethical considerations [28]. Cambridge Analytica collects Facebook user data through a personality testing application that gathers information from participating users and collects data from their friends without explicit consent. Hackers have attacked Analytica to gather and expose that information on the Internet. The app's terms of service allowed access to limited user information, but it exploited a loophole to access a broader range of personal data. The scandal tarnished Facebook's reputation and raised public awareness about the importance of data privacy. Kanakia, Shenoy, and Shah (2019) proved that it underscores the need for precise consent mechanisms, vigilant oversight of data sharing, and robust regulatory enforcement to ensure the responsible handling of private data in the digital age [29].

4.4 Limitations and future directions

While identifying attacks or breaches of private data and taking punitive action is effective, it faces limitations related to detection, privacy concerns, and global complexities. Firstly, some advanced attacks can go undetected for a significant period, undermining the timely identification of breaches as in Du and Pi (2022) [3]. Additionally, striking a balance between monitoring and individual privacy rights is challenging, and extensive monitoring may lead to increased data privacy concerns as proved by Choo (2011) [30]. Thirdly, Cyberattacks and breaches can occur across borders, complicating identifying responsible parties and enforcing punitive measures.

Future directions aim to enhance detection capabilities, strengthen regulatory frameworks, and empower users while staying ahead of evolving cyber threats. Choo (2011) explained that to enhance detection capabilities, people can share threat intelligence, update AI, and build a zero-trust architecture [30]. Secondly, continuously updating and strengthening data protection regulations to keep pace with evolving attack methods and technologies. Lastly, Empowering users with more control over their data and facilitating transparent consent mechanisms can enhance data privacy as in Wang and Johnson (2018)[27].

5 DISCUSSION

User privacy safety is of extreme concern in the generation of big data. To set up sturdy privacy protection regulations that shield user's rights while enabling meaningful analysis, data anonymization, informed consent, data minimization, and secure data storage and transmission are essential principles. The first principle, data anonymization, includes disposing of or encrypting personally identifiable information (PII) from the dataset, making it impossible to identify individuals directly. This substantially reduces the threat of re-identification, ensuring the person's privacy is preserved [9]. Informed consent is a critical principle that calls for organizations to offer customers complete information on how their data might be used and shared before they consent. Data minimization advocates for gathering and keeping the minimal amount of data needed for the intended evaluation, thus reducing the risk of privacy breaches or data misuse. Lastly, secure data storage and transmission techniques are crucial in data mining algorithms, and agencies have to use encryption techniques to shield non-public facts at rest and in transit.

To illustrate the practical usage of the user privacy protection technique, diverse case studies from current research were performed such as one study by Du and Pi which delves into the intricacies of maintaining privacy in cellular social networks, highlighting the importance of data anonymization in safeguarding users' sensitive information [3]. This technique ensured that the records mining technique respected the user's privacy while at the same time considering significant evaluation. Another study explored the results of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on big data processing. It emphasized the importance of transparent data collection practices and the need to obtain explicit people's consent. By aligning their information processing activities with GDPR concepts, the researchers demonstrated a practical implementation of user privacy protection coverage in compliance with regulatory frameworks [15].

The inherent tension between information utilization and privacy protection, new vulnerabilities, and privacy risks can also be data mining strategies. However, striking the right balance between information utilization and privacy renovation calls for ongoing research and innovation in privacy-keeping strategies, including advanced anonymization and differential privacy mechanisms. Moreover, adapting the privacy protection method to cater to advancing fields like computing and the Internet of Things (IoT) requires exploring lightweight encryption methods and decentralized data processing models in the records mining algorithm [10].

The protection of user data privacy through legal means is a mandatory measure, which depends on the punishment and judgment of the law for the violation of the relevant law. Since laws and regulations are formulated and enforced by the state, they have legal effect on both restricting data privacy violations and data attacks, and therefore the data protection strategy has strong binding force. However, it must be noted that, due to the regional differences of the cultural differences, different regional laws have different orientation, therefore, this gives cross-regional data privacy protection has brought the huge challenge. Every area of the protection tendency and differences may bring cross-regional data against the possibility of potential and success. Because the protection strategy of laws and regulations is mandatory and strong binding, it is quite necessary to protect data privacy through laws and regulations. However, it is worth pointing out that the delay and regional differences of this strategy will have a negative impact on its effectiveness. Therefore, in addition to the formulation of laws and regulations, it is worth promoting the protection method of tracing the source of data infringement through high-tech means.

The strategy of identifying attacks or breaches of private data and taking punitive measures reflects the fundamental principles of protecting data integrity and personal privacy in an interconnected digital environment. This strategy is rooted in proactive vigilance and accountability, crucial in preventing malicious activities and maintaining the trust of individuals and organizations. Xu et al. (2014) explained that the constantly changing nature of cyber threats highlights the urgency of adopting vigilant measures for violation detection [25]. Continuous monitoring, intrusion detection systems, and forensic analysis enable entities to identify abnormal behavior and unauthorized access quickly. However, the complexity of modern attacks requires constant improvement of detection methods to stay ahead of complex threat participants. Punishing data breaches can not only strengthen accountability but also serve as a deterrent for future malicious behavior. Peruzzi et al. (2018) gave us an overview of the Equifax data leak and Cambridge Analytics scandal are profound reminders that lax security measures can have serious consequences [28]. These high-profile cases highlight the necessity of timely and transparent notification of violations to mitigate damage and maintain public trust.

In summary, the strategy of identifying attacks or leaks of private data and taking punitive measures reflects a proactive stance in the field of data protection. Du and Pi (2022) proved that it requires a comprehensive approach, including technological strengthening, legal framework, cross-border cooperation, and a commitment to transparency [3]. This strategy protects personal privacy and maintains the integrity of the digital ecosystem, creating an environment where responsible data management and technological innovation coexist harmoniously.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Qiyuan Qiang, Han Wang and Chenrui Xie contributed equally to this work and should be considered co-first authors.

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