

# WHAT MAKES A PRIVACY ADVOCATE?

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*"A funny collection of people"*

*Former Australian Prime Minister, Bob Hawke on the Australian Privacy Foundation*

*"There is a trend in the NGO community to call it 'civil society.' This is an oxymoron, because we are not civil and we are not a society. We fight over funding. We fight over issues. We fight over attention. A lot of us don't even like each other."*

*Gus Hosein, Privacy International*

*"Judean People's Front! We're the People's Front of Judea! Judean People's Front! Cuh! The only people we hate more than the Romans are the f\*\*cking Judean People's Front."*

*Monty Python, The Life of Brian*

# The Privacy Advocacy Project

- 1) What does it mean to be a privacy advocate?
- 2) What roles do they play?
- 3) How do privacy advocates frame the issue?
- 4) In what organizations do they operate?
- 5) What kind of politics do they engage in?
- 6) How do they “network”?
- 7) Could this network become a “social movement”?

# What makes a privacy advocate?

- Ideology?
- Shared Grievance?
- Background?
- Education?
- The “gut”?

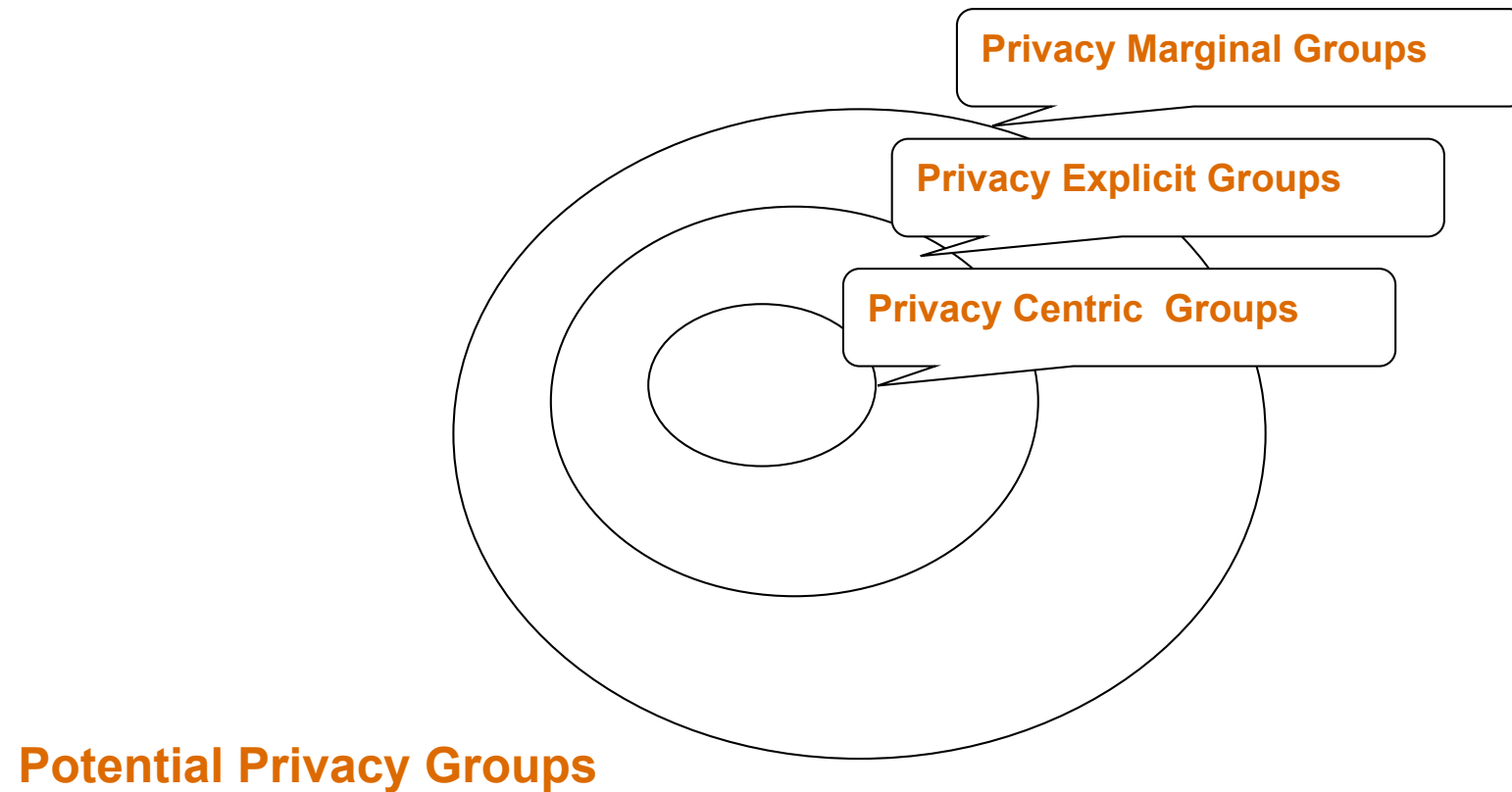
# Advocate Types

- The Advocate-Activist
- The Advocate-Researcher
- The Advocate-Consultant
- The Advocate-Technologist
- The Advocate Journalist
- The Advocate-Artist

# Privacy Advocacy Organizations

- **Privacy-Centric**
  - Privacy International, Electronic Privacy Information Center, Australian Privacy Foundation, Privacy Rights Clearinghouse,
- **Civil Liberties**
  - ACLU, Statewatch, BC Civil Liberties Association, International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group
- **Human Rights**
  - Privatterra, Frontline
- **Consumer Protection**
  - Consumers against Supermarket Privacy Invasion and Numbering (CASPIAN), UK Consumer Association
- **Digital Rights**
  - Electronic Frontier Foundation, Bits of Freedom (Netherlands)
- **The “Single Issue”**
  - Particular technology (e.g. RFID)
  - Type of information (e.g. Health)
  - Vulnerable people (e.g. Children)
  - Business sector (e.g. consumer credit)

# The Privacy Advocacy Network



# The Politics of Privacy Advocacy

- Information Politics
- Accountability Politics
- Leverage Politics
- Symbolic Politics

*Margaret Keck and Katheryn Sikkink,  
Activists Beyond Borders (Cornell Press, 1998)*



## Summary.....

- Privacy advocacy network is stronger now than it has ever been
- More important and widespread than is often realized, despite lack of resources
- A crucial player in the larger privacy policy community
- Can it become a social movement? ---

- *“Privacy will be to the information economy of the next century, what consumer protection and environmental concerns have been to the industrial society of the 20th century,”* Marc Rotenberg
- *“Get a couple beers in them and [privacy advocates] will fantasize about what they call the “Privacy Chernobyl” – the one privacy outrage that will finally catalyze an effective social movement around the issue.”* Phil Agre
- *“If you want to say ‘hey chaps lets go and storm the barricades for privacy so we can all be private together’ – that doesn’t make sense as a political proposition.”*  
Caspar Bowden

- **YES:**

- Few differences between this and environmentalism, anti-globalization etc.
- It took a 100 years after industrialization for an environmental movement to emerge
- Exactly the kind of non-materialistic issue that produced the social movements of the 1960s

- **NO:**

- Because privacy is “different”

- No sense of shared grievance
- Subjective
- Always has to be balanced
- Invisible and circuitous harm
- Privacy advocates are not ‘joiners’
- Diffuse and multidimensional

## Perhaps the wrong question to ask?

- The Internet has changed the characteristics of social movement organization
- The privacy advocacy network is a typical transnational advocacy network



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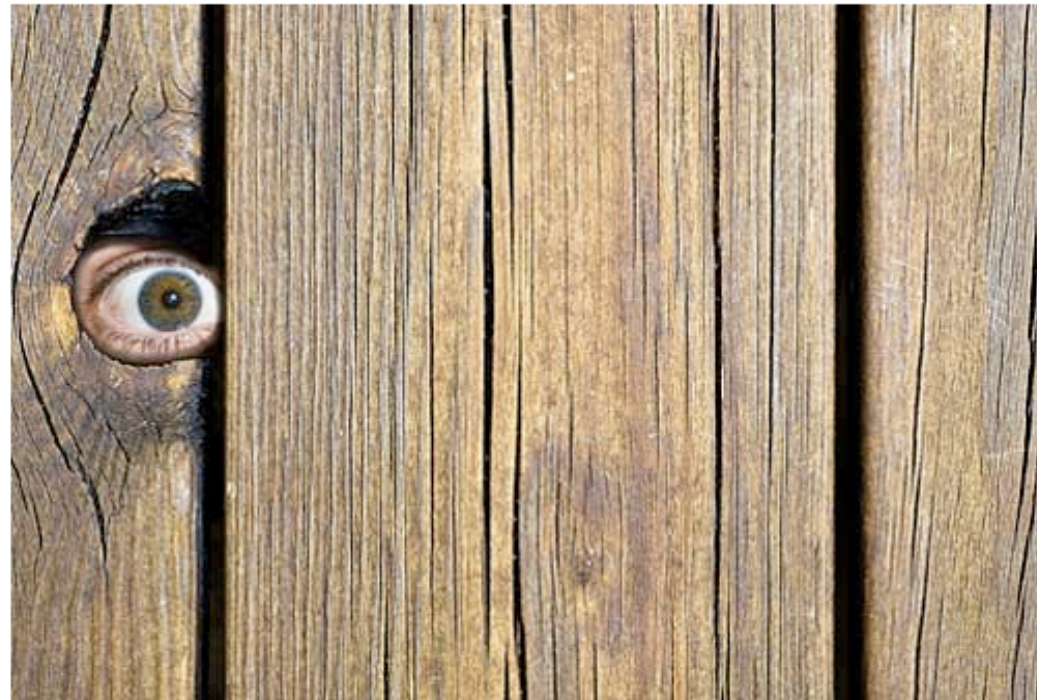
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Privacy advocates are individuals and groups that have emerged from civil society, spontaneously and without official sanction *to resist the spread of surveillance.*

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