



Critical Thinking: Editorial Analysis

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Editorial Analysis: Big Brother

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Big Brother is a concept that someone or something is watching your every move; usually associated to the government or large mega corporate-sized companies like AT&T, Microsoft, or Apple. In many instances it is more of a conspiracy theory than an actual fact. However, recently the Apple Company got caught storing customer location information in the customer's iPhone (the data was stored in plaintext and for twelve months). The editorial I have chosen highlights this technology blunder made by Apple, which was the violation of a person's privacy.

Reviewing the cartoon you see a gentleman walking from his car towards a bar and lounge building; he looks like he is texting or perhaps reading something on his phone. Floating just above his head is a blimp with large text that reads "YOU ARE HERE" with a big, dark arrow pointing down to the man. Just under the arrow is some subtext that says "iPHONE TRACKING". In the lower right-hand corner, is some small text that asks "HAVE WE COME TO THIS?". The visual imagery is pretty good; however, without the "YOU ARE HERE" text on the blimp, it would be difficult to understand the overall message of the cartoon.

If we analyze the question "HAVE WE COME TO THIS?", it can be translated into: Why are we tracking a person going to a bar and lounge? Is there no privacy? If we examine the text "iPHONE TRACKING", which is on the blimp hanging just above the man, the implication is if you use an iPhone (all iPhone customers), that the Apple Company is tracking your every move. In this case, they were tracking locations for twelve months. And finally, the large text "YOU ARE HERE" insinuates that everyone will know where you are at and you will not have any privacy. Each of these questions can be connected to *pathos*, meaning that they are appealing to the viewer's self-interest of privacy; not many people want to be tracked by a "Big Brother". I would go as far as to say that a rational person would look at this editorial and be convinced that Apple has made a mistake.

Using factual information to create a clever, though very sincere cartoon, the illustrator definitely makes his point. The visual imagery and the textual elements make an influential statement about privacy.

The Apple Company eventually admitted to their multiple technology mistakes, and aimed to correct the iPhone tracking database. In this editorial scenario, Big Brother was called out about their tracking by being formulated into a perfect editorial cartoon. The right to privacy should be a paramount ideology embraced by all technology companies. The final thought is that there is no place for “Big Brother” in our cell phones.

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References

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