EST I – Essay

Student's Name _____

National ID _____

Test Center: _____

Duration: 50 minutes

Instructions:

- Read the directions carefully before writing your essay.
- Use the first 2 pages as a draft, anything written on these pages will not be taken into consideration.

Directions: This assignment will allow you to demonstrate your ability to skilfully read and understand a source text and write a response analysing the source. In your response, you should show that you have understood the source, give proficient analysis, and use the English language effectively. If your essay is off-topic, it will not be scored.

Only what you write on the lined paper in your answer document will be scored. Avoid skipping lines, using unreasonably large handwriting, and using wide margins in order to have sufficient space to respond. You can also write on the planning sheet in the answer document, but this will not be evaluated. No other scrap paper will be given. Be sure to write clearly and legibly so your response can be scored.

You will be given 50 minutes to complete the assignment, including reading the source text and writing your response.

Read the following passage, and think about how the author uses:

- Evidence, such as applicable examples, to justify the argument.
- Reasoning to show logical connections among thoughts and facts.
- Rhetoric, like sensory language and emotional appeals, to give weight to the argument.

Privacy is Power

1. Imagine having a master key or password that gives access to the front door of your home, your bedroom, your diary, your computer, your phone, your car, your safe deposit, and your health records. Would you go around making copies of that key and giving them out to strangers?

2. You might think you have nothing to hide and nothing to fear. You are wrong – unless you are an exhibitionist with masochistic desires of suffering identity theft, discrimination, joblessness, public humiliation, and totalitarianism, among other misfortunes. If you weren't that important, businesses and governments wouldn't be going to so much trouble to spy on you.

3. Your data is not valuable only because it can be sold. Social media websites do not technically sell your data, for instance. They sell the power to influence you. They sell the power to show you ads, and the power to predict your behavior. Social media websites are not really in the business of data – they are in the business of power.

4. There is a tight connection between knowledge and power. The French philosopher Michel Foucault goes even further and argues that knowledge in itself is a form of power. The more someone knows about us, the more they can anticipate our every move and influence us. The British political theorist Steven Lukes argues in his book *Power* (1974) that power can bring about a system that produces wants in people that work against their own interests. People's desires can themselves be a result of power, and the more invisible the means of power, the more powerful they are. Examples of power shaping preferences today include tech using research about how dopamine works to make you addicted to an app, or when you are shown political ads based on personal information that makes a business think you are a particular kind of person (a 'persuadable', as the data-research company Cambridge Analytica put it, or someone who might be nudged into not voting, for instance).

5. The mass collection and analysis of personal data has empowered governments and prying companies. The Stasi (the security service of the German Democratic Republic), for instance, managed to have files only on about a third of the population, even if it aspired to

have complete information on all citizens. Intelligence agencies today hold much more information on all of the population. In an interview with *The Washington Post* in 2014, the US filmmaker Laura Poitras claimed that a social media platform can be a boon to intelligence agencies.

6. Data vultures are incredibly savvy at making us give up our data, more or less voluntarily, and snatching it away from us even when we try to resist. Loyalty cards are an example of power making us do certain things that we would otherwise not do. When you are offered a discount for loyalty at your local supermarket, what you are being offered is for that company to conduct surveillance on you. An example of power doing things to us that we don't want it to do is when social media websites record your location on your smartphone, even when you tell it not to.

7. Institutions in the digital age have hoarded privacy power, but we *can* reclaim the data that sustains it, and we *can* limit their collecting new data. The power of big tech looks and feels very solid. But tech's house of cards is partly built on lies and theft. The data economy can be disrupted. For example, when downloading apps and buying products, choose products that are better for privacy. Use privacy extensions on your browsers. Turn your phone's Wi-Fi, Bluetooth and locations services off when you don't need them.

8. Furthermore, privacy is not only about you. Privacy is both personal and collective. When you expose your privacy, you put us all at risk. Privacy power is necessary for democracy – for individuals to have freedom to associate, speak their minds, or read what they are curious about. If we are going to live in a democracy, the bulk of power needs to be with the people. Privacy is important because it gives power to the people. Protect it.

Write a response that demonstrates how the author makes an argument to persuade readers that privacy is power and that people should protect it, or else risk disempowering others. In your response, analyze how the author uses at least one of the features from the essay directions (or features of your own choosing) to develop a logical and persuasive argument. Be certain that your response cites relevant aspects of the source text.

Your response should not give your personal opinion on the merit of the source text, but instead show how the author crafts an argument to persuade readers.

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Please write your essay here

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