Contextual Identity: Freedom to be All Your Selves
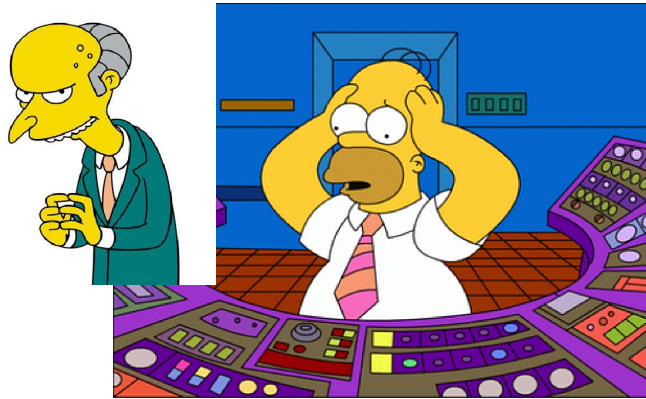
Monica Chew, Sid Stamm
Mozilla
{mmc,sid}@mozilla.com

Contextual Identity
Be who you want, when you want

Multiple identities abound!

Josephine Baker

Colleen Lachowicz

Snoop Dogg (Snoop Lion)

All your identities in one big identity

"Having two identities for yourself is an example of a lack of integrity."
             - Mark Zuckerberg, *The Facebook Effect*

"If you have something that you don't want anyone to know, maybe you shouldn't be doing it in the first place."
                   - Eric Schmidt, interview on CNBC

All your identities in one big identity

"Facebook is a community where people use their real identities. We require everyone to provide their **real names**, so you always know who you're connecting with. This helps keep our community safe."

source: www.facebook.com/help/112146705538576/

Mr. Burns is not pleased

A real world example

Bobbi Duncan

Taylor McCormick

Outed when the choir director added them to a public Facebook group, Queer Chorus

All your services in one big service

Fuck you, Google

I use my private Gmail account to email my boyfriend and my mother.

There's a BIG drop-off between them and my other "most frequent" contacts.

You know who my third most frequent contact is?

My abusive ex-husband.

Which is why it's SO EXCITING, Google, that you AUTOMATICALLY allowed all my most frequent contacts access to my Reader, including all the comments I've made on Reader items, usually shared with my boyfriend, who I had NO REASON to hide my current location or workplace from, and never did.

source: www.fugitivus.net/2010/02/11/fuck-you-google/
catalyst: Google Buzz/Reader/Contacts integration

Twitter Direct Messaging Failures

sources: twitter.com/dmfail, wikipedia.org/wiki/Weinergate
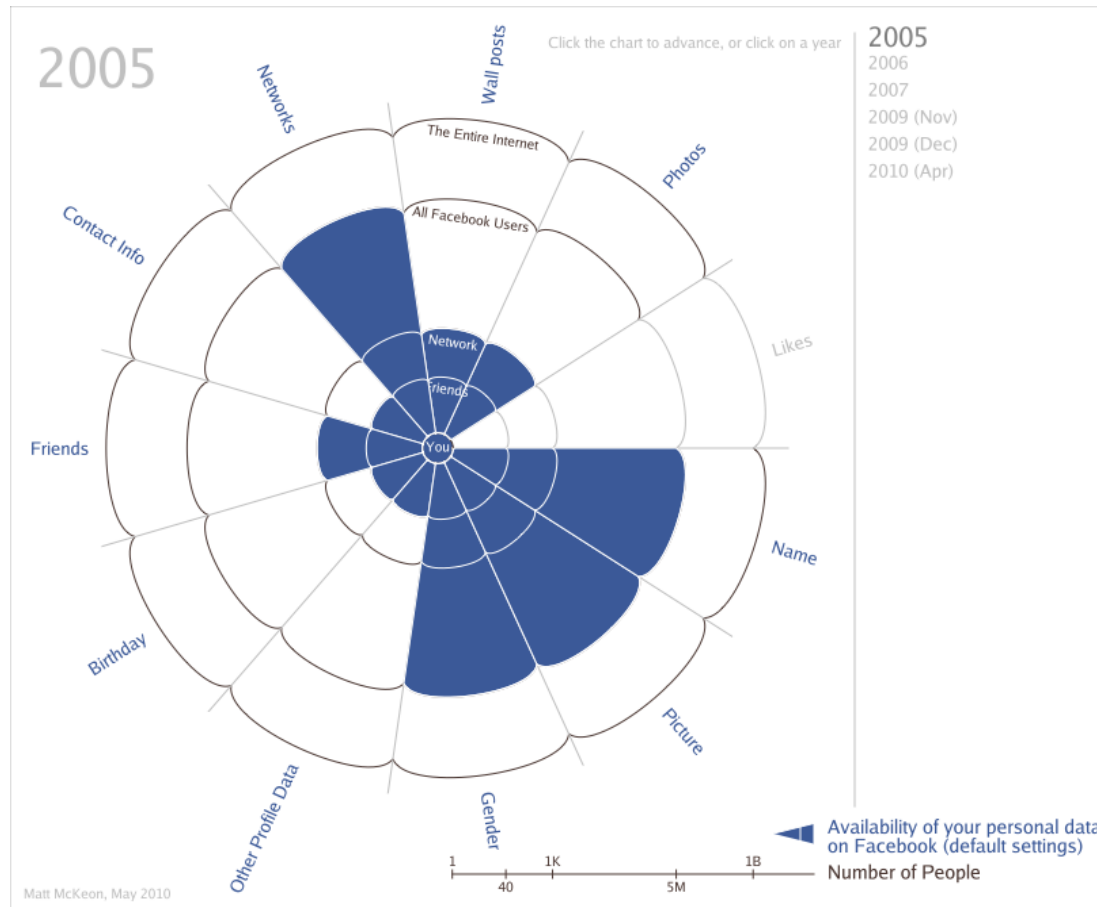catalyst: typing '@' instead of 'd'

What's in our privacy toolbox?

- Cryptography [RSA, AES, Diffie-Hellman]
- Contextual integrity [Barth et al.]
- Access control [Bell, LaPadula]
- Anonymizers [Dingledine, Marlinspike]
- Blockers [AdBlockPlus, Disconnect.me]

Our tools are necessary but not sufficient.
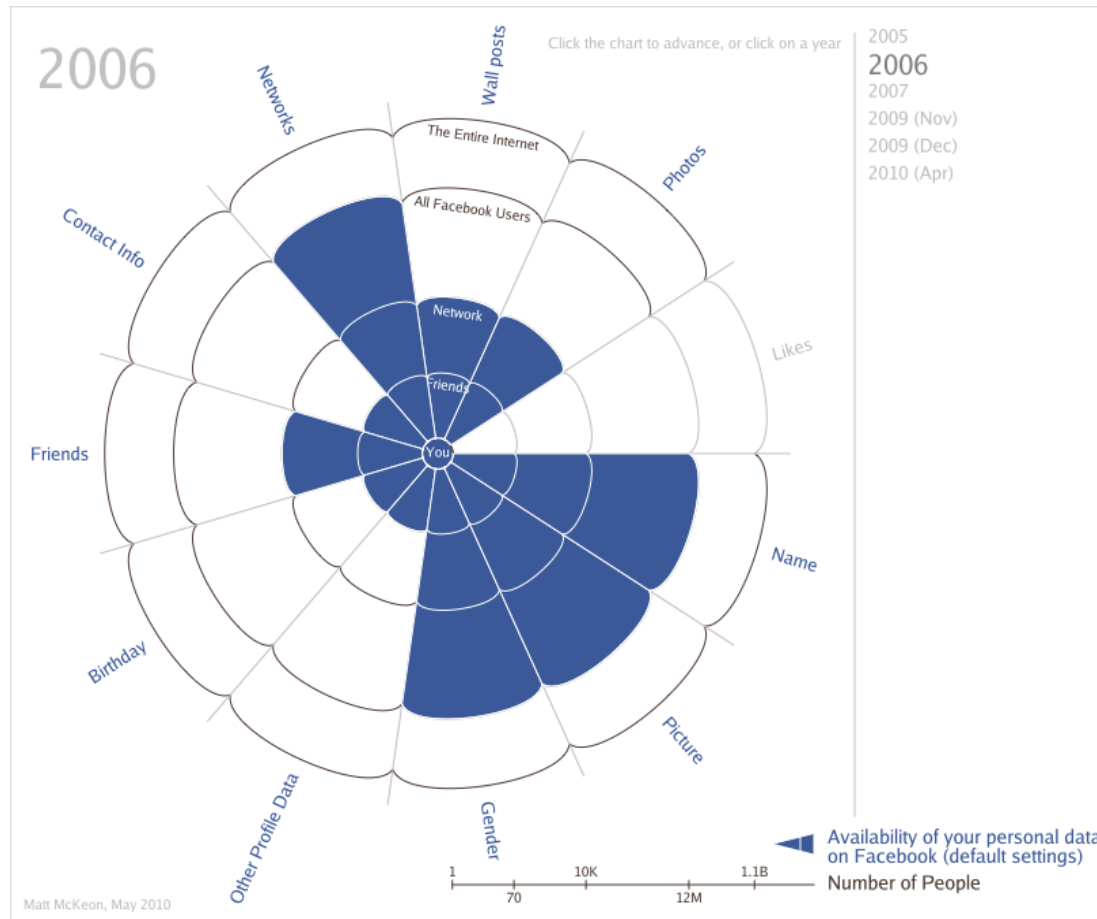
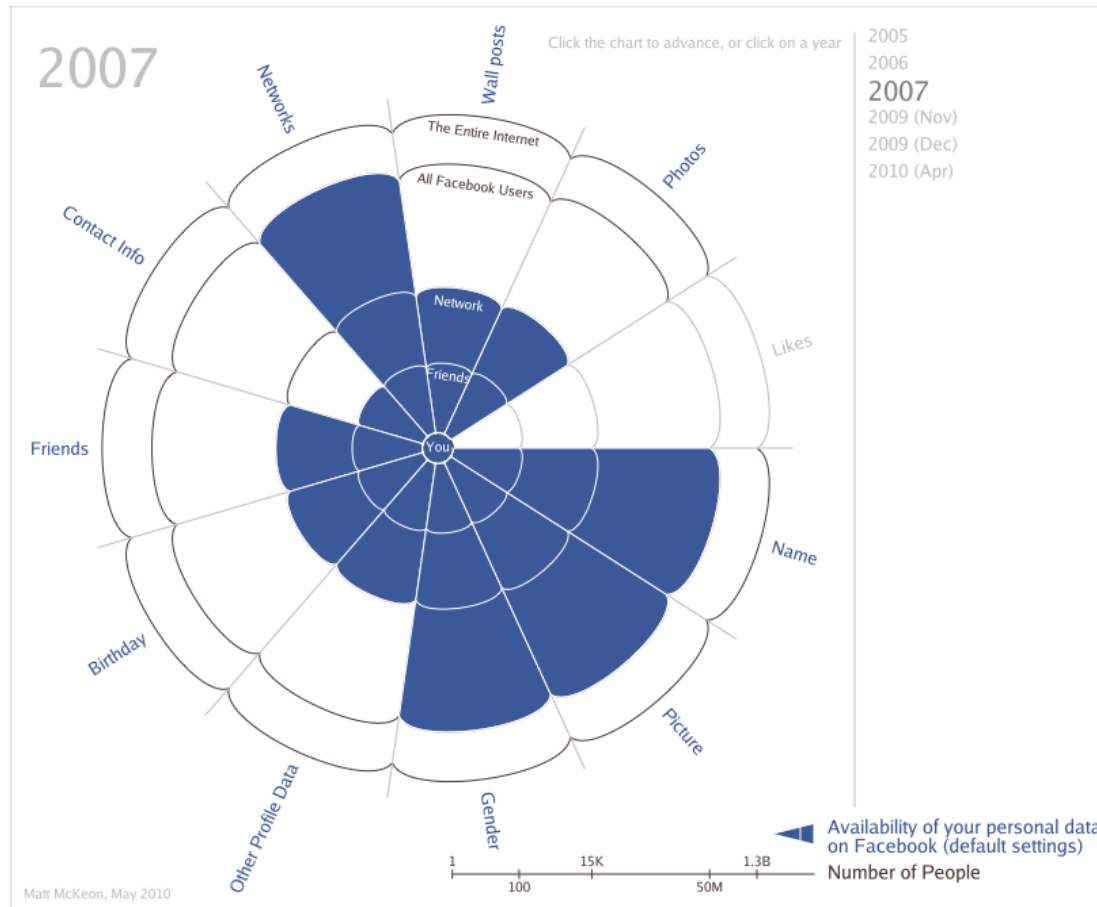# Access control: state of the art?

Changes are hard to track

source: http://mattmckeon.com/facebook-privacy/
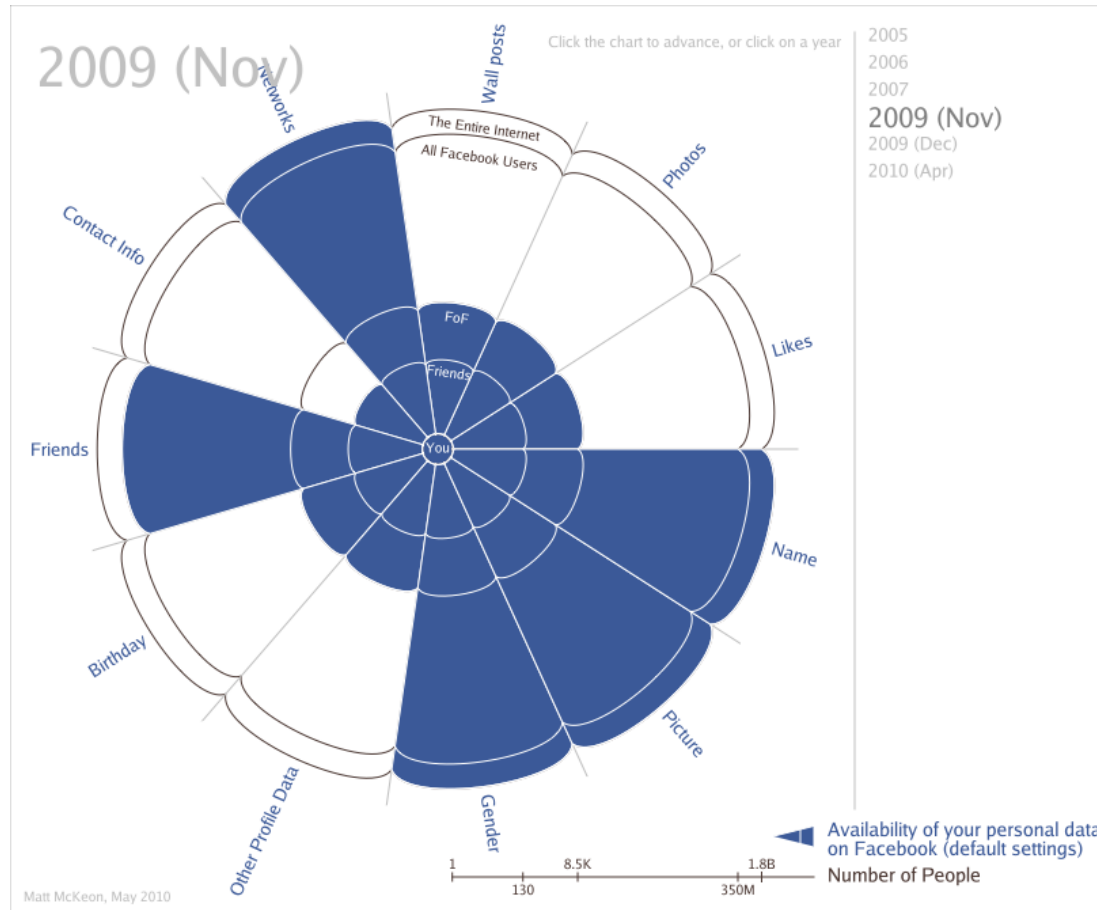
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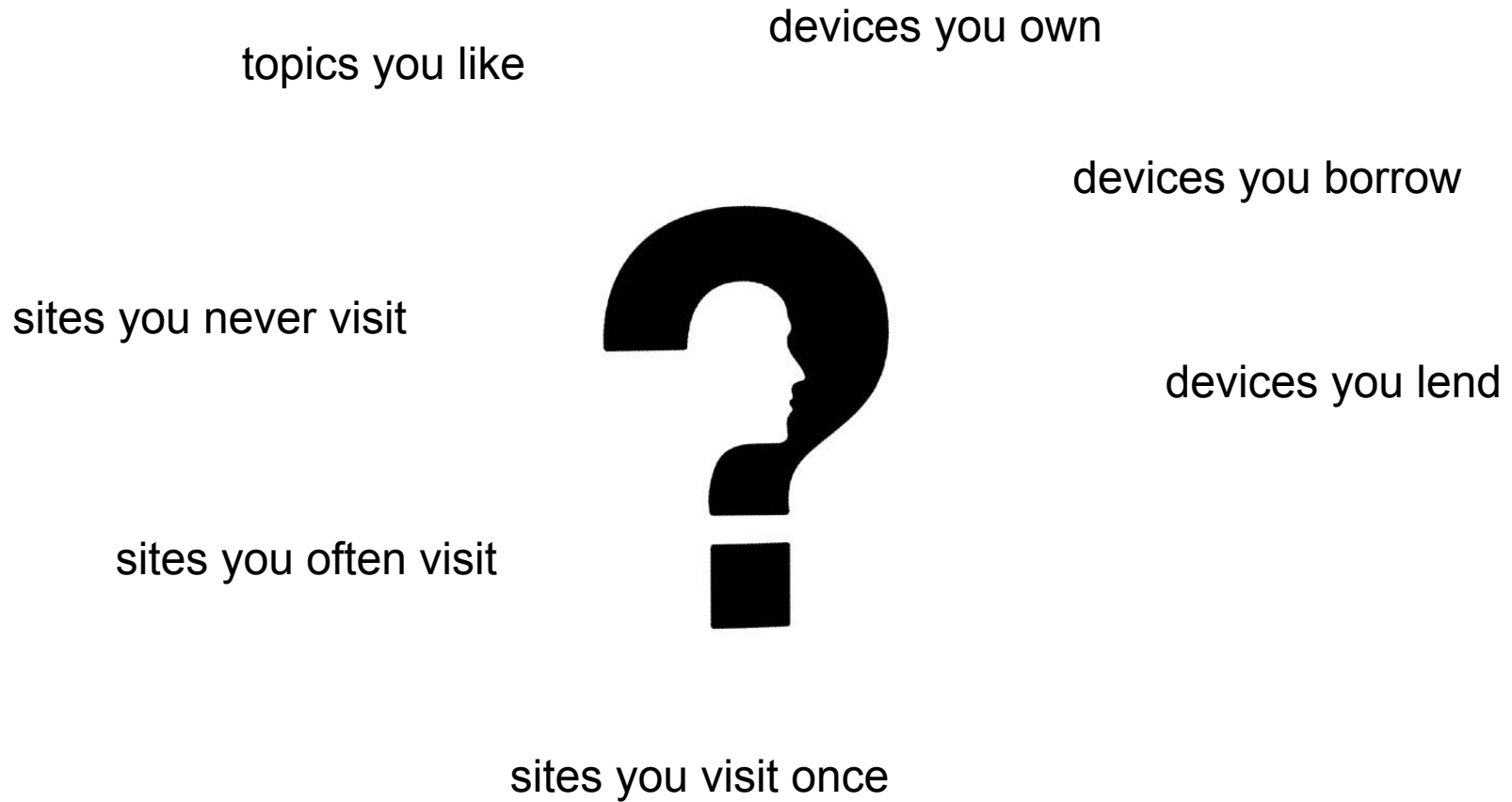# Changes are hard to track

source: http://mattmckeon.com/facebook-privacy/
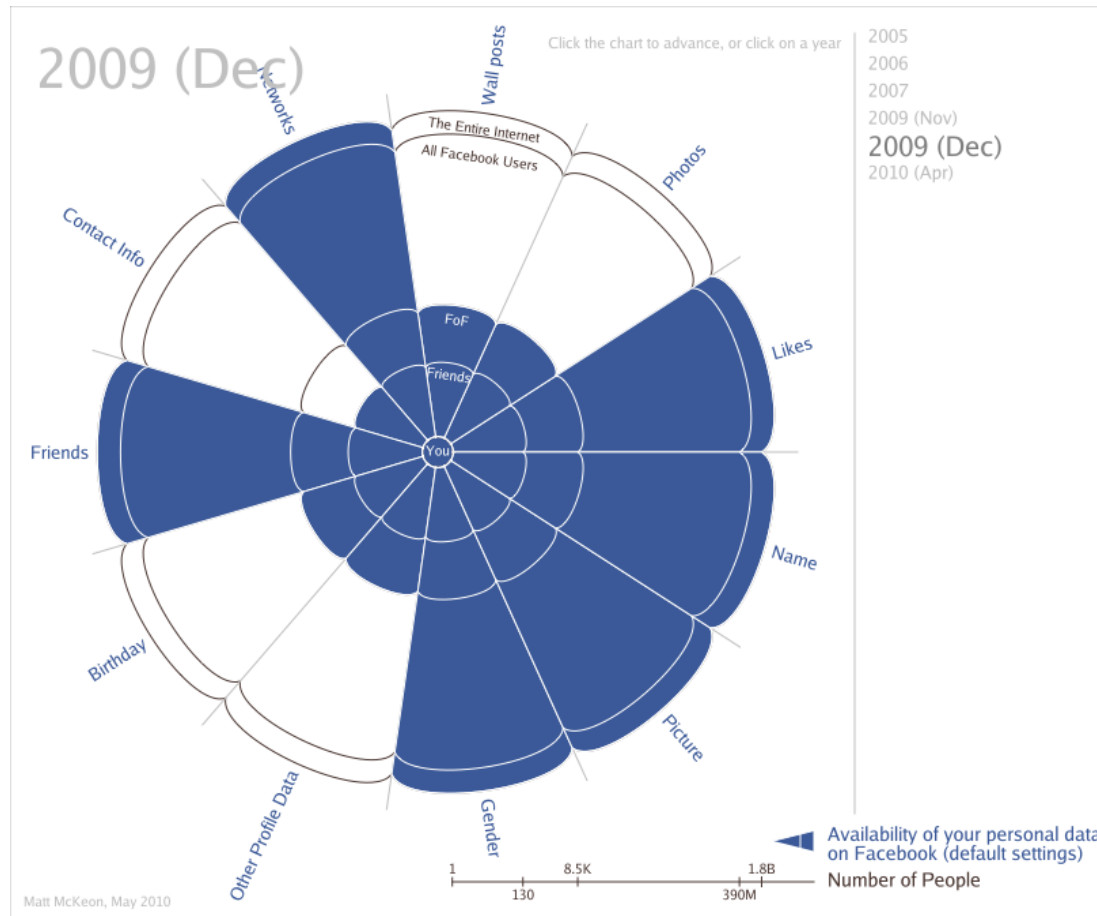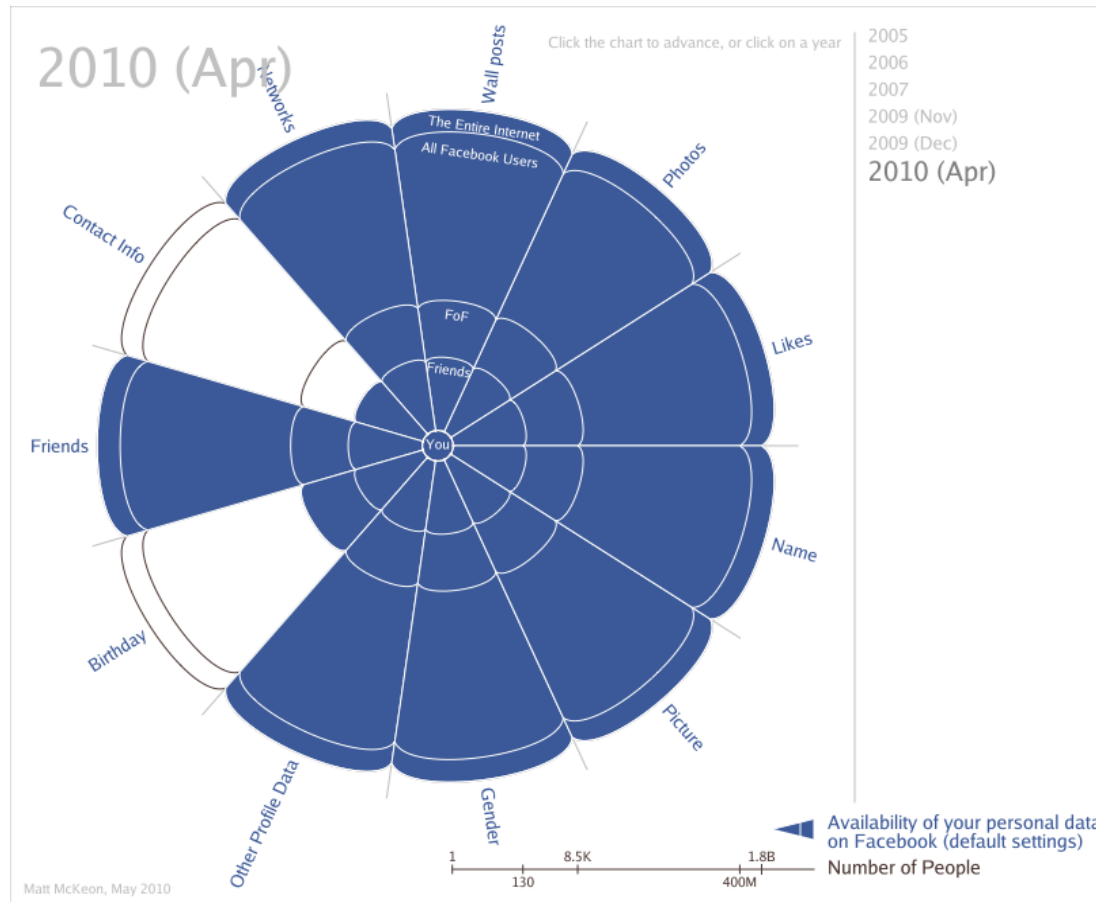
Be who you want, when you want

How do we get there?

Call to action

Study mental models

What makes up online identity?

devices you own

topics you like

devices you borrow

sites you never visit

devices you lend

sites you often visit

sites you visit once
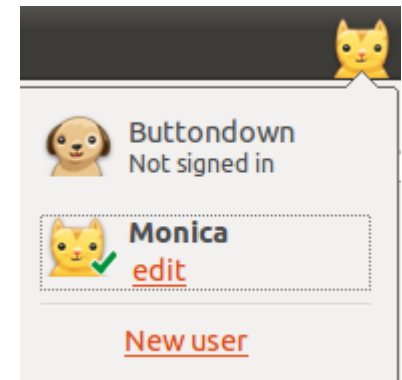
Call to action

Study identity management techniques

Multiple browsers

Multiple devices

Multiple profiles

Alternate identities
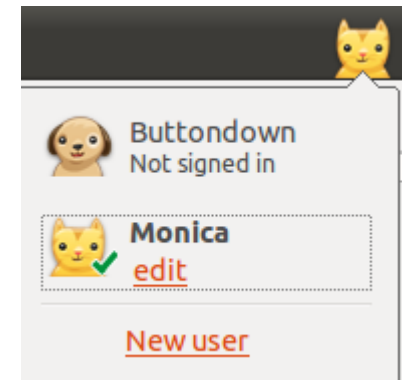
Privacy mode
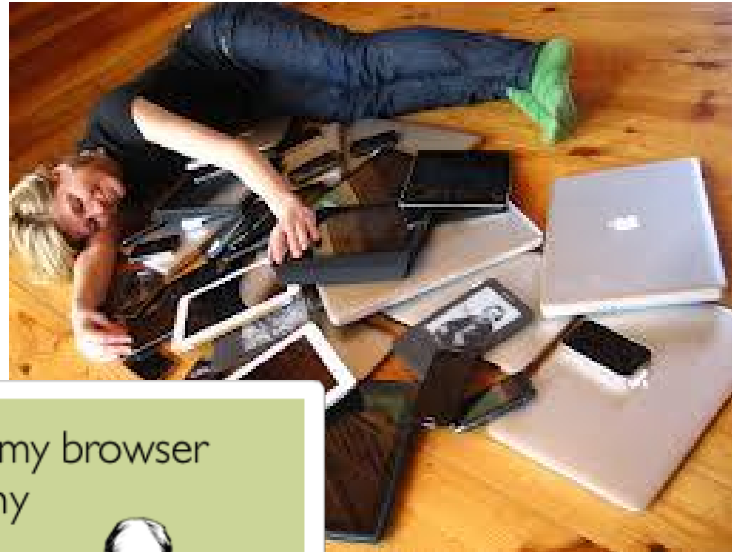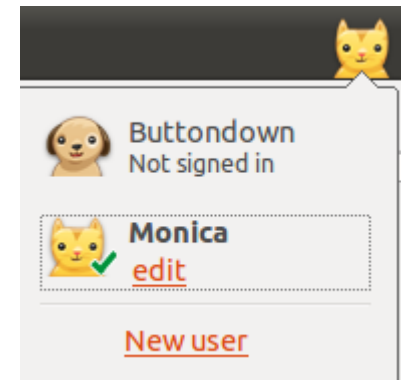
Challenge
People value community

Challenge
People want their data everywhere

Popemobiles make it hard to share

Hey, W2SP.

Think different.

Room for imperfect solutions

- Obscurity can be enough
- Embarrassment reduction
- Troll avoidance
- Mistake recovery

How can we make things better?

- Question our own notions of identity, privacy and publicity
- Write software for how users *are*, not how we wish them to be

Open questions

- How can we design privacy and sharing to be less brittle, more flexible?
- How can we balance desire for spontaneous interaction with the need for privacy?

Works in progress

- [Blushproof](#) [with David Keeler]

- [Cookiemonster](#) [with David Dahl]
- Behavioral segmentation [Mozilla UR]

Questions?