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Untangling the privacy paradox

As users we value our privacy. On the other hand, if we want to maximize personalization and customization of different cloud services so that they can work for us optimally, we need to give them access to our most important memories as well. The memories that matter most to us are most often the memories we call "private", those memories that we don't want to share or give access to other people, but we want to "remember" them and let them influence our actions. We would keep them in Google's cloud services backed up and stored, regardless of any device or drive that might crash or get lost (Nissenbaum, 2009).

This creates a direct correlation between personalization and transparency, or the lack of privacy between me and Google services. Perfect personalization requires me not to keep "secrets" from Google and as I keep more "private" information Google will give me a more generic and general and less personalized response. On the face of it there is a paradox here, we would like to keep our privacy from Google but to keep the possibility of sharing everything and without censoring our googly "self". In practice, as users, we rely on Google more than ever to reveal our most personal and hidden information (Stephens-Davidowitz, 2017; Zuboff, 2018).

Using Google's services case study I will show how analysis using post-phenomenological theory might shed on the paradox of privacy a new light and enable a better understanding of what leads to action.