
FROM NEWSPAPERIZATION TO NEURAL SURVEILLANCE: REIMAGINING PRIVACY IN THE AGE OF META AI GLASSES

Shresht Gupta, O.P. Jindal Global University

Introduction

People know what they do; frequently they know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what they do does.

-Michel Foucault

Have you ever considered why privacy is safeguarded by the law with such great emphasis? What historical events prompted legal expert like *Judge Cooley* to recognize a right "*to be let alone*"¹? Was it the introduction of artificial intelligence, facial recognition, or widespread surveillance? The response is much older than these technologies. The right to privacy emerged not due to thinking machines, *but in reaction to individuals who would not stop looking*. At the end of the nineteenth century, the most significant threat to privacy was not modern technology rather it was *yellow journalism*² (also called *tabloid journalism*).³ This type of sensationalized reporting disguised as public interest commercialized curiosity and turned the private lives of individuals into daily entertainment for society and newspapers realized that they could profit from gossip, commodify intimacy, and capitalize on intrusion⁴ and in this context, *Samuel D. Warren and Louis D. Brandeis* wrote their influential 1890 article, "*The Right to Privacy*"⁵. Their work was not merely a theoretical exploration of law or an effort to create a new right from philosophical ideas. It stemmed from real-life experiences and social needs. Warren later admitted that his interest was fueled by his profound discomfort with the ongoing invasions of social privacy, while Brandeis noted that the initiative was undertaken at Warren's request⁶.

¹ Thomas M Cooley, A Treatise on the Law of Torts or the Wrongs Which Arise Independent of Contract (2nd edn, Callaghan & Co 1888) 29.

² Robert E Park, 'The Yellow Press' (1927) 7(1) Sociology and Social Research 3.

³ E L Godkin, 'The Rights of the Citizen: IV. To His Own Reputation' (1890) 8 Scribner's Magazine 58, 61–66.

⁴ Erin K Coyle, 'E L Godkin's Criticism of the Penny Press: Antecedents to a Legal Right to Privacy' (2014) 31(2) American Journalism 262.

⁵ Samuel D Warren and Louis D Brandeis, 'The Right to Privacy' (1890) 4 Harvard Law Review 193, 196

⁶ Melvin I Urofsky and David W Levy (eds), Letters of Louis D Brandeis, 1870–1907: Urban Reformer vol 1

The immediate trigger was intensely personal because Newspapers like The *Saturday Evening Gazette* persistently detailed the private domestic life of the Warren family⁷, turning their private reality into a public spectacle⁸. Yet, Warren recognized that his family's situation was merely a sign of a much broader problem and that was the growing technology like “instantaneous photograph devices”⁹, which threatened to collect and disseminate the information about an individual which is personal in nature to the world at large, coupled with the increased susceptibility of individuals to having their actions, words, images, and traits shared without their permission outside the secure circle of family and trusted friends¹⁰ and for which they write:

*“Instantaneous photographs and newspaper enterprise have invaded the sacred precincts of private and domestic life; and numerous mechanical devices threaten to make good the prediction that “what is whispered in the closet shall be proclaimed from the housetops”.”*¹¹

Moreover, they observed with remarkable foresight about the gossips which in the current world is a predominant form of information gathering, he writes:

*"The press is overstepping in every direction the obvious bounds of propriety and of decency. Gossip is no longer the resource of the idle and of the vicious, but has become a trade, which is pursued with industry as well as effrontery. To satisfy a prurient taste the details of sexual relations are spread broadcast in the columns of the daily papers. To occupy the indolent, column upon column is filled with idle gossip, which can only be procured by intrusion upon the domestic circle."*¹²

They expressed regret that gossip was no longer just for those with nothing to do or who were mean-spirited, but had turned into a profitable business that was pursued with great effort and boldness. Newspapers began to fill their pages with meaningless chatter gathered from invading people's private lives, making personal experiences public entertainment¹³. However, their worries went beyond just causing embarrassment. They claimed that these intrusions

(State University of New York Press 1971) 303.

⁷ Alpheus Thomas Mason, *Brandeis: A Free Man's Life* (The Viking Press 1946).

⁸ Dorothy J Glancy, 'The Invention of the Right to Privacy' (1979) 21(1) *Arizona Law Review* 1, 8.

⁹ Samuel D Warren and Louis D Brandeis, 'The Right to Privacy' (1890) 4 *Harvard Law Review* 193, 195.

¹⁰ Dorothy J Glancy, 'The Invention of the Right to Privacy' (1979) 21(1) *Arizona Law Review* 1, 8.

¹¹ Samuel D Warren and Louis D Brandeis, 'The Right to Privacy' (1890) 4 *Harvard Law Review* 193, 195.

¹² Samuel D Warren and Louis D Brandeis, 'The Right to Privacy' (1890) 4 *Harvard Law Review* 193, 196 ; Dorothy J Glancy, 'The Invention of the Right to Privacy' (1979) 21(1) *Arizona Law Review* 1, 8.

¹³ *ibid.*

caused "mental pain and distress, far greater than could be inflicted by mere bodily injury".¹⁴

They observed a great thing about the Scuttlebutt's or the modern day word gossip and wrote that:

"Each crop of unseemly gossip, thus harvested, becomes the seed of more, and, in direct proportion to its circulation, results in a lowering of social standards and of morality. Even gossip apparently harmless, when widely and persistently circulated, is potent for evil. It both belittles and perverts. It belittles by inverting the relative importance of things, thus dwarfing the thoughts and aspirations of a people. When personal gossip attains the dignity of print, and crowds the space available for matters of real interest to the community, what wonder that the ignorant and thoughtless mistake its relative importance. Easy of comprehension, appealing to that weak side of human nature which is never wholly cast down by the misfortunes and frailties of our neighbours, no one can be surprised that it usurps the place of interest in brains capable of other things. Triviality destroys at once robustness of thought and delicacy of feeling. No enthusiasm can flourish, no generous impulse can survive under its blighting influence".¹⁵

Therefore, establishing a never-ending cycle where financial gain led to more invasions of privacy with twisted public identity of individuals and gradually degraded social values. Thus, privacy was not only seen as an individual need but also as a legal and cultural protection against a world that valued intrusion over restraint. The danger stemmed not just from technology itself but from the combination of technology, business interests, and perhaps with the oldest instinct of civilisation that is not merely the desire to know others but what I will like to call the *Tragedy of Human Curiosity*, it is rarely attracted to the ordinary truths people willingly reveal. Instead, it is irresistibly drawn towards the fragments of private life that were never publicly revealed.

Therefore, it is this *appetite*, than technology itself alone, that has always posed the greatest challenge to privacy. A camera transformed from a simple photography tool into a device that could take someone's identity without permission. As a result, Warren and Brandeis aimed to shield people from the overly pushy press, the photographers, or anyone using modern tools for capturing or replicating images or sounds. Henry James referred to this issue as

¹⁴ Samuel D Warren and Louis D Brandeis, 'The Right to Privacy' (1890) 4 Harvard Law Review 193, 196.

¹⁵ *ibid.*

"newspaperization"¹⁶, where private lives became public shows. More than a hundred years later, the question still stands. *Have newspapers or the newspaperization vanished, or have they simply changed from?*

As Warren and Brandeis observed that "belittl[ing] and pervert[ing]" influence of newspaperization, "*dwarfing the thoughts and aspirations of a people*."¹⁷ Therefore, as Newspaperization tended to create a distorted appetite for more newspaper publicity, which in turn tended to validate the process of newspaperization itself, thereby making it even more difficult for individuals of more refined sensibilities to protect their privacy.¹⁸ In a similar fashion, technologies and devices like *Meta AI Glasses* create a distorted appetite for ever more advanced iterations of the same technology, which in turn spurs competitors to create their own comparable or even more advanced options. This perpetual cycle gradually transforms such technologies from extraordinary innovations into ordinary and normal social norms, effectively normalising silent/non-consensual capturing or recording and what may be described as a softer and socially acceptable form of privacy violation.

Moreover, it legitimises a culture in which these intrusions cease to be perceived as exceptional and instead become the new common norm, gradually burying the original conception of privacy beneath an evolving technological norm. Hence, the deeper question, *therefore, is not merely that these kind of technologies exist, but that every new technological development like this creates an even greater appetite for the next, making it progressively more difficult for a person to preserve that retreat from the world that privacy was meant to provide, and this all injure the very essence of a person's identity- "his estimate of himself."*¹⁹

The Silent Erosion of Bargaining Power Over Privacy

As one of the most sophisticated advancements in consumer wearable technology, Meta's AI-powered wearable ecosystem transforms ordinary eyewear into a smart computing platform. The current offerings include the *Ray-Ban Meta Smart Glasses* and *Oakley Meta Smart*

¹⁶ Dorothy J Glancy, 'The Invention of the Right to Privacy' (1979) 21(1) Arizona Law Review 1, 8. ; Henry James, Preface to *The Reverberator*, *Madame de Mauves*; *A Passionate Pilgrim and Other Tales* (Macmillan 1950) xiv.

¹⁷ Dorothy J Glancy, 'The Invention of the Right to Privacy' (1979) 21(1) Arizona Law Review 1, 11. ; Samuel D Warren and Louis D Brandeis, 'The Right to Privacy' (1890) 4 Harvard Law Review 193, 196

¹⁸ Dorothy J Glancy, 'The Invention of the Right to Privacy' (1979) 21(1) Arizona Law Review 1, 11.

¹⁹ Samuel D Warren and Louis D Brandeis, 'The Right to Privacy' (1890) 4 Harvard Law Review 193, 197.

Glasses²⁰, while the forthcoming *Ray-Ban Meta Display Glasses*, which feature the Meta Neural Band²¹, will further enhance the technological functions of wearable artificial intelligence. The available models are equipped with a 12-megapixel ultra-wide camera, multiple microphones, open-ear directional speakers, onboard sensors, wireless connectivity, and Meta AI²². This integration allows users to take high-resolution photos and 3K videos, make hands-free calls, listen to music, receive real-time language translations, recognize objects and surroundings, and gain contextual information through natural voice interactions, all without a smartphone.²³ These Display Glasses enhance this idea by incorporating a transparent optical display in the right lens, allowing users to read messages, see notifications, get visual assistance, follow turn-by-turn navigation, view short films, and get real-time translations right in front of their eyes while still experiencing the real world. Additionally, the Meta Neural Band, a wrist-mounted interface that interprets delicate muscular motions, further improves these capabilities by allowing users to operate and navigate the display with intuitive finger gestures²⁴. These technologies collectively form a wearable device that can continuously sense, interpret, and engage with the user and their surroundings by integrating gesture identification with artificial intelligence. The ease with which Meta Ray Ban AI Glasses can record is not the most important problem. Smartphones have already made taking photographs in public places more common, and cameras have been in use for a very long time. The real threat lies elsewhere. These glasses subtly alter the connection between the observer and the observed by eliminating what might be referred to as the *"bargaining power over privacy"* of the person.

Traditionally, recording someone on video was a straightforward action that anyone could notice. Usually, when someone wanted to snap a picture or make a video, they would take their smartphone out of their pocket, unlock it, go to the camera app, point it at the person, and start recording. Even if someone tried to keep their phone hidden or to record quietly, the act of holding and adjusting the device would often make others aware that something was happening and creating a moment of awareness and this moment was important when viewed through the

²⁰ Meta, 'Oakley Meta' Meta <https://www.oakley.com/en-us/l/oakley-meta> (accessed 20 July 2026).

²¹ Meta, 'EMG Wearable Technology' Meta <https://www.meta.com/en-gb/emerging-tech/emg-wearable-technology/> (accessed 20 July 2026).

²² Meta, 'What Are Smart Glasses?' Meta <https://www.meta.com/in/ai-glasses/learn/what-are-smart-glasses/> (accessed 20 July 2026).

²³ Matt Kamen, 'Review: Ray-Ban Meta Smart Glasses' WIRED (15 November 2023) <https://www.wired.com/review/review-ray-ban-meta-smart-glasses/> (accessed 20 July 2026).

²⁴ Meta, 'What Are Smart Glasses?' Meta <https://www.meta.com/in/ai-glasses/learn/what-are-smart-glasses/> (accessed 20 July 2026).

Lense of the individual being observed or being captured because it allowed the individual being recorded to get “*the chance to assess the circumstances and make a significant choice accordingly*”.

Back then, privacy wasn't perfectly secured, but the individual still had something very valuable: the chance to protect their privacy before it was completely lost, and the new Meta AI Glasses take away that chance. To grasp this situation better, think about a simple example:

Imagine not a celebrity who is always in the public eye, but rather a regular, somewhat shy person who enjoys just being themselves. One day, this person goes to a café and chooses a colourful and fun *Galaxy Unicorn Bubble-gum Milkshake*. There is nothing wrong or harmful about enjoying such a drink. It is simply a harmless moment of personal happiness. Close by, another customer is casually filming a travel vlog with Meta Ray Ban AI Glasses. The person wearing the glasses might not have meant to focus on anyone specific; they could have just been capturing the vibe of the café or asking Meta AI questions about what they see. However, the camera ends up recording the person sitting in the background, and that evening, the vlog gets posted online. Friends recognize the individual almost instantaneously. Family members start sharing the video. Social media users post comments mocking the colourful milkshake, questioning the individual's maturity, or transforming an otherwise trivial personal choice into a subject of ridicule. In a short period, what was once a private and innocent moment has evolved into a lasting digital memory that can be viewed, shared, downloaded, and circulated among countless strangers. The issue at hand is not whether enjoying a whimsical milkshake warrants legal protection, as it clearly does not. Rather, the more critical question is fundamentally different:

Did the individual engage in any wrongful behaviour? No ; Did the individual willingly forfeit their privacy? No ; Did anyone approach and explain, "I am wearing glasses with artificial intelligence that can record you, analyse your surroundings, and possibly upload your image online"? Certainly not.

Most importantly, if that same person had seen someone take out a smartphone, hold it upright, and begin filming in a conventional manner, would they have reacted differently? Almost certainly. They might have moved to a different table, concealed their face, politely requested not to be included in the recording, or simply walked away. Whether such a request would have been honoured is a different matter. What is crucial is that the option to object existed, the

opportunity to negotiate existed and the opportunity to preserve one's privacy existed. Therefore, Meta AI Glasses eliminate that opportunity before the individual even realizes that.

It may be argued that Meta has consciously incorporated privacy safeguards to address concerns surrounding covert recording. Ray-Ban Meta Smart Glasses come with a white light that blinks when pictures are taken and flashes constantly when videos are recorded.²⁵ This light cannot be turned off, and Meta has also put in place software rules that automatically shut down the camera if the light is damaged, blocked, or interfered with.²⁶ Ironically, the very necessity of these safeguards reveals that the possibility of concealed recording was sufficiently foreseeable to warrant software intervention. However, these actions do not fix the bigger issue. They assume²⁷ that a regular person will know that a small light on what looks like a normal pair of glasses means that recording is happening²⁸. This idea doesn't match what happens in real life. If someone is in a crowded subway, enjoying a drink in a café, or strolling on a lively road, they probably won't notice or think about the significance of a tiny blinking light. Everything around them may seem normal, and the act of watching goes unseen. More importantly, by the time they figure out they might be filmed, the video has already been made, and they can no longer say no. The concern isn't only about possible shame and embarrassment but also about losing personal space that used to keep everyday events from becoming something everyone knows. In our digital age, this concept is even more important because once private information is online, we can no longer control who sees it, how it's interpreted, or what happens to it next.

When looked at from the angle of privacy instead of the tech aspect of progress, Meta Ray Ban

²⁵ Meta, 'Meta's AI Glasses: Your Questions Answered' Meta Newsroom (July 2026) <https://about.fb.com/news/2026/07/metas-ai-glasses-your-questions-answered/> (accessed 20 July 2026).

²⁶ Gadgets Now, 'Meta Will Disable Your Ray-Ban Glasses Camera if You Tamper with the Recording Light: Here Is What Changes' Gadgets Now (30 June 2025) <https://gadgetsnow.indiatimes.com/tech-news/meta-will-disable-your-ray-ban-glasses-camera-if-you-tamper-with-the-recording-light-here-is-what-changes/articleshow/132259247.cms> (accessed 20 July 2026) ; Meta, 'Meta's AI Glasses: Your Questions Answered' Meta Newsroom (July 2026) <https://about.fb.com/news/2026/07/metas-ai-glasses-your-questions-answered/> (accessed 20 July 2026).

²⁷ Larry Irving, Julia B Hankin and Roberto E Aguirre, *The Worldwide Digital Divide: Information Poverty, the Internet and Development* (2002); Georgetown University Global Social Security Research, 'The Global Tech Divide: How the Digital Revolution Is Leaving Some of Us in the Digital Dark Ages' <https://gssr.georgetown.edu/the-forum/topics/technology/the-global-tech-divide-how-the-digital-revolution-is-leaving-some-of-us-in-the-digital-dark-ages/> (accessed 20 July 2026).

²⁸ Vidya Krishnan, 'The Pitfalls of Technology in India' *India Development Review* <https://idronline.org/article/inequality/the-pitfalls-of-technology-in-india/> (accessed 20 July 2026); Oxfam India, *India Inequality Report 2022: Digital Divide* (Oxfam India 2022) <https://www.oxfamindia.org/knowledgehub/workingpaper/india-inequality-report-2022-digital-divide> (accessed 20 July 2026).

AI Glasses show a very concerning issue. They do not simply facilitate surveillance, rather, they normalize it while subtly diminishing the individual's capacity to oppose it and by the time a person recognizes that their privacy is being invaded, the recording has been made, the image has been saved, and the dignity that privacy was meant to safeguard has already been laid bare for public scrutiny²⁹. In this regard, Meta AI Glasses could be regarded as the most discreet violators of privacy ever developed. Their intrusions tend to be unremarkable, often accidental, and nearly imperceptible. However, it is this very unobtrusiveness that renders them perilous.

The most perilous outcome, however, is not found in the recording itself but in the lasting impact of the knowledge it generates. The humiliation from what might seem like a small situation can slowly turn into a lasting mental weight. It's not that drinking a Galaxy Unicorn Bubblegum Milkshake is actually shameful, but rather that something I wanted to keep private has now spread to the minds of many others. The sadness of knowing is that it lasts forever. Once a piece of information is in someone else's head, it can't just be taken back or removed. Life isn't like an episode of Black Mirror, and society doesn't have a device like the Neuralyzer from Men in Black that can wipe memories away. Maybe one day, Meta could create a brain chip that promises to do just that, which is somewhat ironic because it would be a tech fix for a privacy issue caused by tech itself. Until then, the damage stays permanent.

The problem, then, is not hard to understand because something personal that I intentionally decided to keep private, maybe even from my closest friends and family, is now known by others without my consent. Saying that the information was not important does not solve anything. Privacy is not just for keeping major secrets safe. It allows a person to choose who knows about them, when they know it, and how they find that out. The milkshake itself was not the problem; it was the inability to control that information that mattered. Once that private detail spreads in society, it is impossible to take it back. It circulates through conversations, gossip, screenshots, algorithms, recommendations, and numerous digital reproductions, each iteration increasingly expanding the audience beyond what was initially anticipated, a phenomenon eloquently articulated by Warren and Brandeis:

“In this, as in other branches of commerce, the supply creates the demand. Each crop of unseemly gossip, thus harvested, becomes the seed of more, and, in direct proportion to its

²⁹ Michaela Padden, 'The Transformation of Surveillance in the Digitalisation Discourse of the OECD: A Brief Genealogy' (2023) 12(3) Internet Policy Review.

circulation, results in the lowering of social standards and of morality. Even gossip apparently harmless, when widely and persistently circulated, is potent for evil. It both belittles and perverts. It belittles by inverting the relative importance of things, thus dwarfing the thoughts and aspirations of a people. When personal gossip attains the dignity of print, and crowds the space available for matters of real interest to the community, what wonder that the ignorant and thoughtless mistake its relative importance. Easy of comprehension, appealing to that weak side of human nature which is never wholly cast down by the misfortunes and frailties of our neighbors, no one can be surprised that it usurps the place of interest in brains capable of other things. Triviality destroys at once robustness of thought and delicacy of feeling. No enthusiasm can flourish, no generous impulse can survive under its blighting influence.”³⁰

The law cannot manage every whisper, joke, or act of gossip, nor can it force society to forget because the tragedy of knowledge is that once it escapes into the minds of others, it is impossible to recall and can never truly be reclaimed back. Individuals will inevitably judge others, whether intentionally or not, based on the information they possess, and the only meaningful legal protection has therefore always existed at an earlier stage. It is the right to privacy that prevents personal information from escaping into the world in the first place, because once it has escaped, the law may penalize the breach, but it can never erase the knowledge that has already spread. Ultimately, the true concern is not the act of recording itself. Society has coexisted with cameras for decades. The real change is the unnoticed loss of a person's ability to control their own privacy and the silent erosion of the individual's bargaining power over their privacy. In the past, when someone recorded something, it gave the person a chance to notice they were being filmed or photographed, to say no, leave, or simply not get involved.

Meta AI Glasses quietly take away that chance. Someone might not even know they are being recorded, watched, or studied, or that parts of their life have already been turned into information that can show their habits, likes, daily patterns, and behaviors. Privacy has never been just about stopping people from taking pictures. It has always focused on keeping a person's right to choose if, when, and how they are known by others. When technology strips away that freedom before a person even realizes it is gone, it does not only capture an image. It captures control itself, and that is where the most serious threat to the right to privacy truly

³⁰ Samuel D Warren and Louis D Brandeis, ‘The Right to Privacy’ (1890) 4 Harvard Law Review 193, 196.

begins.

The Illusion of Progress

More than a century ago, *Henry David Thoreau* critically examined humanity's unquestioning enthusiasm for technological advancement with remarkable foresight. Watching the enormous effort devoted to laying telegraph lines, he asked:

*"We are in great haste to build telegraph lines from Maine to Texas, but do we have anything important enough to communicate to justify this kind of cost and effort? We are eager to tunnel under the Atlantic Ocean to bring the old world to the new, but the first news that will arrive at the American ears will probably be that Princess Adelaide has the whooping cough!"*³¹

Thoreau's criticism was never aimed at technological innovation itself. It aimed at humanity's inclination to honour technological prowess without initially questioning if the worth it generates is commensurate with the price it demands and whether the value it produces is proportionate to the cost it imposes.³²

A similar philosophical concern was expressed by the French poet *Paul Valéry*, who observed in 1895 that:

*"Western cultures worship information as if it were an omnipotent beast and place no limits on what they seek to know. The Chinese by contrast do not wish to know too much, because they understand that knowledge must not increase endlessly. If it continues to expand, it causes endless change, and creates a need to adjust and abandon age-old traditions and wisdom. You are better off ignorant than stricken with the European disease of constant invention and change, and the debauchery of endless confusion from new ideas."*³³

He contrasted this with societies that recognised that knowledge should not expand without restraint and his warning captures a paradox that remains even relevant today because

³¹ Henry David Thoreau, *Walden; or, Life in the Woods* (Ticknor and Fields 1854) 41.

³² Abhijeet Pokhriyal, 'Thoreau, Simplicity and the Quest for Meaning in the Digital Age' Medium (3 October 2024), <https://abhijeetdtu.medium.com/thoreau-simplicity-and-the-quest-for-meaning-in-the-digital-age-e252eaa132b2> accessed 20 July 2026.

³³ Robert Donald Davidson Gibson, 'Paul Valéry' in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (26 October 2025); Larry Orman, 'Information Paradox: Drowning in Information, Starving for Knowledge' (2015) 34(4) *IEEE Technology and Society Magazine* 63–73 ; Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and the Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Cornell University Press 1990).

information undoubtedly empowers humanity, yet information is also dangerous because, once acquired, it cannot easily be ignored, recalled, or forgotten. Moreover, the pursuit of new information often transforms the very environment from which our earlier knowledge emerged, rendering long established social understandings obsolete. Therefore, knowledge creates technology, technology reshapes society, and society is then forced to relearn how to live within a world that it has itself transformed.³⁴

Meta AI Glasses present a compelling illustration of this paradox. The concern is not that these glasses constantly record every passerby, nor that every wearer intends to intrude upon another's privacy, rather the deeper concern is that such technologies quietly alter the social conditions upon which ordinary individuals have relied to protect themselves and for many years, the apparent action of lifting a smartphone indicated that recording was taking place. That basic idea helped a person to easily respond, resist, step back, or discuss their own space and boundaries. Meta AI Glasses slowly make that common social knowledge obsolete. Regular people can no longer be sure if something is being recorded, as the technology looks just like a regular pair of glasses, partly because people don't fully understand the tech and its possible risks to privacy. That simple understanding preserved an individual's practical ability to react, object, move away, or negotiate the boundaries of personal privacy. Meta AI Glasses gradually make that shared social knowledge obsolete. The ordinary observer no longer possesses the same certainty about whether recording is occurring because the technology appears indistinguishable from an ordinary pair of spectacles due to lack of technological knowledge among individuals and its potential harms to privacy. The resulting *information asymmetry* leaves one person aware of the technology's capabilities while the other remains entirely unaware that the opportunity to preserve privacy may already have disappeared.

Therefore, Meta AI Glasses ultimately invite reflection upon what may be called the *fundamental dilemma of obsolescence*.³⁵ In a fast changing technological society, the rate of obsolescence and the resulting loss of information may overwhelm the rate of new technological advancement itself³⁶ which leads to a continuing loss not merely of information,

³⁴ Dagm Alemayehu Tegegn, 'The Role of Science and Technology in Reconstructing Human Social History: Effect of Technology Change on Society' (2024) 10(1) Cogent Social Sciences 2356916.

³⁵ John Boulgarides and Vincent San Filippo, 'The Dilemma of Technical Obsolescence' (Aeronautics and Space Engineering and Manufacturing Meeting, Los Angeles, 2 October 1967).

³⁶ Larry Orman, 'Information Paradox: Drowning in Information, Starving for Knowledge' (2015) 34(4) IEEE Technology and Society Magazine 63–73.

but of knowledge, insight, and wisdom accumulated over generations.³⁷ As new technologies rapidly transform the conditions of human interaction, long established social understandings regarding privacy, observation, and personal autonomy risk becoming obsolete before society has adequately understood the consequences of their disappearance. The danger is that while younger generations may become increasingly knowledgeable about modern tools and technologies, they may simultaneously lose access to the wisdom and learning generated through centuries of social experience³⁸ regarding the value of anonymity, restraint, and the right to be let alone. Consequently, as the world changes faster through increasingly sophisticated technologies, we may paradoxically become more ignorant about the basic human values and rights that those technologies quietly displace and make a surrounding that make it the new normal.³⁹

The question that now arises is not merely whether Meta AI Glasses represent technological progress, but whether, in our pursuit of new forms of knowledge, innovation and observation, we risk rendering obsolete the very wisdom that once taught us why privacy mattered in the first place, *while simultaneously normalising new and even better forms of surveillance that no longer even appear to be surveillance and once this form of soft surveillance is woven into the fabric of everyday life, its intrusiveness ceases to be questioned, and then privacy is not ignored by law but quietly eroded by social acceptance of the same fabric while taking away one's bargaining power over their privacy*.⁴⁰

Conclusion: When Intrusion Becomes Ordinary

Imagine walking to work every morning and seeing a beggar sitting at the same street corner. On the first day, you stop, feel their suffering, and offer help. The next day, you do the same. Weeks pass, then months. Slowly, a shift starts to happen, not in the life of the beggar, but in yourself. The pain that used to instantly move you to care becomes something you see often.

³⁷ Larry Orman, 'Information Paradox: Drowning in Information, Starving for Knowledge' (2015) 34(4) IEEE Technology and Society Magazine 63, 66.

³⁸ Larry Orman, 'Information Paradox: Drowning in Information, Starving for Knowledge' (2015) 34(4) IEEE Technology and Society Magazine 63.

³⁹ Janna Anderson, Lee Rainie and Emily A Vogels, 'Experts Say the "New Normal" in 2025 Will Be Far More Tech-Driven, Presenting More Big Challenges' Pew Research Center (18 February 2021) <<https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2021/02/18/experts-say-the-new-normal-in-2025-will-be-far-more-tech-driven-presenting-more-big-challenges/>> (accessed 20 July 2026) ; Michaela Padden, 'The Transformation of Surveillance in the Digitalisation Discourse of the OECD: A Brief Genealogy' (2023) 12(3) Internet Policy Review.

⁴⁰ Michaela Padden, 'The Transformation of Surveillance in the Digitalisation Discourse of the OECD: A Brief Genealogy' (2023) 12(3) Internet Policy Review.

You start to question if the poverty is real or just another act performed by the beggar every day. Psychology calls this slow change *habituation*⁴¹, a type of non-associative learning where seeing the same thing over and over makes you feel emotional towards that thing. Eventually, this leads to *emotional desensitization*, where seeing the same situation no longer stirs the compassion and empathy that it used to⁴². What was once a deeply human response is quietly replaced by emotional indifference. In other words, you begin to perceive begging and poverty not as individual human tragedies, but as a recurring *pattern*, and once suffering becomes a pattern and it gets normalised within the human mind.⁴³ Even the most compassionate individual cannot continue carrying every burden forever as there inevitably comes a point where helping gives way to *compassion fatigue*.⁴⁴ No matter how much an individual tries, they will never be able to cure every wrong in society. The greatest tragedy is that when the one who seeks to cure can no longer cure that wrong, that wrong slowly begins to eat the humanity within them. Perhaps privacy is now travelling the same path. The repeated introduction of increasingly intrusive technologies risks emotionally desensitising society to privacy violations that would once have appeared extraordinary. *Every new device normalises the next, until surveillance no longer resembles surveillance but merely another feature of everyday life*.⁴⁵

Meta AI Glasses invite precisely this future reflection. The question is not whether artificial intelligence can make recording more seamless, more intelligent, or more convenient. It undoubtedly can. The deeper inquiry undertaken by this paper is whether every technological capability represents a genuine human necessity or whether, as *Thoreau* feared and *Paul Valéry* warned, society has developed an insatiable appetite for information and constant invention without questioning the human cost at which they are acquired. The gravest privacy concern is not the possibility of recording itself, but the silent erosion of an individual's bargaining and negotiating power brought about by an ever widening gap between rapidly evolving technology

⁴¹ CH Rankin and others, 'Habituation Revisited: An Updated and Revised Description of the Behavioral Characteristics of Habituation' (2009) 92 *Neurobiology of Learning and Memory* 135.

⁴² Diana S Ng-Mak, Suzanne Salzinger, Ronald Feldman and Ann Stueve, 'Normalization of Violence among Inner-City Youth: A Formulation for Research' (2002) 72 *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 92; Sylvie Mrug, Paige S Loosier and Michael Windle, 'Violence Exposure across Multiple Contexts: Individual and Joint Effects on Adjustment' (2008) 78 *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 70.

⁴³ Ratna Manucha, 'APPsolutely Clueless' *The Times of India* (25 May 2026) <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/toi-edit-page/appolutely-clueless/> (accessed 20 July 2026).

⁴⁴ David Conrad and Yvonne Kellar-Guenther, 'Compassion Fatigue, Burnout, and Compassion Satisfaction among Colorado Child Protection Workers' (2006) 30(10) *Child Abuse & Neglect* 1071; Charles R Figley (ed), *Treating Compassion Fatigue* (Brunner-Routledge 2002).

⁴⁵ Michaela Padden, 'The Transformation of Surveillance in the Digitalisation Discourse of the OECD: A Brief Genealogy' (2023) 12(3) *Internet Policy Review*.

and ordinary human understanding. A right that cannot practically be recognised can scarcely be exercised. We too readily presume that every fascinating technological innovation is necessarily synonymous with progress⁴⁶, yet seldom pause to ask the larger question. Does this technology lessen human pain and improve people's lives to the point that it really makes up for the damage it does to human dignity, privacy, and independence? Does it find a fair middle ground between its advantages and the risks it can bring? Does it change social norms in a way that allows all people, no matter how familiar they are with technology or their background, to truly use their rights? Or does it instead create a hidden asymmetry where one individual possesses the power to observe while the other remains unaware that observation is even possible? If a technology has the capacity to turn into an instrument of surveillance then we as part of the society must ask not merely whether such surveillance is intentional, but whether the convenience it offers can ever justify the cost at which it comes because if we don't ask these questions then we might risk rendering obsolete the very wisdom that once taught us why privacy is essential in the very first place, while at the same time we might be normalising the forms of surveillance that no longer even appear to be surveillance anymore because they have quietly become the accepted pattern of everyday life. Hence, Privacy is not lost all at once through one big technology change, but rather slowly fades away as we become numb to the ongoing threats against it.

⁴⁶ Maurice Stucke and Ariel Ezrachi, 'Beware of Toxic Innovation' Institute for New Economic Thinking (29 August 2022) <https://www.ineteconomics.org/perspectives/blog/beware-of-the-toxic-innovation> (accessed 20 July 2026).