Data colonialism: Are developing countries ready for harvesting their own data?

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PS 2.4. "Data is Power! Confronting Data Colonialism, Ownership issues and Hidden Biases"

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Old vs New Colonialism

- At least 500 years ago…..it was normal if a powerful country invade other countries and took the land, people and natural resources…

- The colonized countries might not be aware what have been stolen or did not know what to do with the resources they had.

- Until now, the world started looking back…realizing what should have not been done …

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THE DEBATE

It's Time for French Museums to Return Cambodian Artifacts

A new report recommends returning artifacts seized from French colonies in Africa. Cambodia should also be included.

By **Darren Touch**
December 13, 2018

France presents draft law for returning colonial-era artifacts to African countries

FRANCE

The French government presented a draft law Wednesday that would enable France to return certain cultural artifacts taken from African countries during the colonial era.

What is happing now?

- Since 2019, the global agenda is moving towards digitalization, and the Cambodian government adopt the digitalization into its pentagonal strategies. As result, the Ministry of Health has developed Digital health strategy 2023-2033 and just established a Digital health Department in 2024. However, the human resource in this area is still limited.

- The use of electronic devices and internet has become a new norm. According to WB data, the mobile cellular subscription in Cambodia was 116/100 people in 2022. So, Cambodia is so much modernizing the ways of life and moving toward digitalized systems

- Society has been pressured people to rely on mobile phone by making daily activities less and less convenient if you do not have mobile phone and access to internet.

Then we have heard about backdoors….!

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By Katie Bo Lillis

⊙ 14 minute read · Updated 4:12 PM EDT, Mon July 25, 2022

TECHNOLOGY

TikTok refugees flee to RedNote in intensifying digital cold war

US user migration from TikTok to yet another Chinese app being touted as 'Western awakening movement' in China

By JIAN XU
JANUARY 17, 2025

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Apple agrees to pay millions after Siri was accused of recording private conversations

Apple has agreed to a $95 million settlement over allegations that its Siri voice assistant recorded users without consent. The settlement awaits approval from a U.S. District Judge.

What will be revealed/leaked next?

The colonialism repeats itself…

- While many developing countries adopt digitalization agenda, they do not have the capacity to effectively navigate their system within this context yet.

    - Digitalization means → more and much more data collected

    - Data on populations have been and will be collected, with or without consent, then it will be used by those who have access to it or who have the capacity to analyze it.
        - Example, our mobile phone number has been given to a Gaming business/micro finance institutions…

    - The owner of the data do not know what data were collected/stolen and/or did not know what those data will be used for.

What should be the ways forward?

- Digitalization is not bad – it is for the development of the globe. However, measures should be taken to ensure equitable benefits of the digitalization.

- Many developing countries received financial and technical support to implement the digitalization agenda, however, most are at the stage of data collection.
  - What do to with the huge amount of data collected? → Machine learning (AI)
  - Some organization→ produce health and other statistics for all the countries, even the country itself does not know where the statistics came from.

- Equity should be applied to data harvesting as developing countries need more capacity building in data science so that they could optimally used their own data and equitably share it for the benefit of global society.

Thank You