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Dear Apple, The iPhone X and Face ID are Orwellian and Creepy

Who the hell actually asked for that horrific Face ID? The CIA?



For the company that famously used 1984 in its advertising to usher in a new era of personal computing, it is pretty ironic that 30+ years later they would announce technology that has the potential to eliminate global privacy.

I've been waiting 10-years since the first iPhone was announced for a full-screen device that is both smaller in my hand but has a larger display and higher capacity battery. However, I do not want these features at the cost of my privacy, and the privacy of those around me.

While the ease of use and user experience of Face ID is apparent, I am not questioning that, the privacy concerns are paramount in today's world of consistent security breaches. Given what we know from Wikileaks Vault7 and the CIA / NSA capabilities to hijack any iPhone, including any sensor on the phone, the very thought of handing any government a facial ID system for them to hack into is a gift the world may never be able to return. Face ID will have lasting privacy implications from 2017 moving forward, and I'm pretty sure I am not alone in not wanting to participate.

The fact of the matter is the iPhone X does not need Face ID, Apple could have easily put a Touch ID sensor on the back of the phone for authentication (who doesn't place their finger on the back of their phone?). I mean imagine how cool it would be to put your finger on the Apple logo on the back of your iPhone for Touch ID? It would have been a highly marketable product feature that is equally as effective as Face ID without the escalating Orwellian privacy implications.

Just Because You Can Does Not Mean You Should

What Apple has done, is created the ideal iPhone people have been clamoring for, and is asking them to give up their privacy and the privacy of anyone who comes in contact with an iPhone X, in order to use it to its fullest potential. For Face ID to work, the iPhone X actively has to scan faces looking for its owner when locked. This means anyone within a several foot range of an iPhone X will get their face scanned by other people's phones and that's just creepy.

This means that Apple purposely choose to go with Face ID for other reasons. I can only theorize what those reasons might be, but they likely include giving Apple's machine learning systems a wide range of facial data to learn from, as well as trying to improve upon future facial recognition technology for a range of use cases (such as adding Face ID to computers and other devices).

The problem is their utopian idea of what facial recognition can do vs. how it will actually be used by authorities and governments around the world are not aligned with reality. As much as I want an iPhone X, I am not sure I want to compromise my privacy, and the security and privacy of those around me to be a part of Apple's grand Face ID experiment for a \$1000+ price tag. Giving the US government the hardware required to be able to see in the dark in my living room without my permission isn't exactly comforting.

Why 2017 Is The New 1984

I've been using a Mac since I was 4-years old, ran an Apple news and rumor website when I was in high school, and I've even attended [Steve Jobs keynotes](#). I'm pretty much the definition of Apple's target market for a "Pro" level consumer that is willing to spend extra for the cutting edge as I'm both completely locked into Apple's ecosystem and have the income to actually buy their latest gadgets.

However, in the past year something at Apple has drastically changed. It started last year when they announced new MacBook Pro's with an annoyingly loud keyboard and Touch Bar no one wanted. I still haven't bought a new MacBook Pro because I simply don't want a Touch Bar. In fact, I'm even thinking of switching to an iMac as my primary computer to get more CPU for my money, and not have to deal with silly gimmicks with no real increase in performance of the MacBook Pro.

As I stated, Apple fully had the ability to offer Touch ID on the iPhone X and made the decision to pursue facial recognition technology instead. Why Tim Cook and Jony Ives decided to pursue some weird new cyber punk reality where it is now cool to give the government a tool to scan the face of your loved ones, even in the dark, is seriously beyond me.

At this point, I am thinking about purchasing an iPhone X just to try it for a few weeks. I will be disabling and possibly even covering up the Face ID sensor. If I can't stand it, and it's too inconvenient not to use Face ID I will take it back and get an iPhone 8+, or possibly make the jump to Android. The fact Apple has released two major "features" on two flagship products in the past year that are actually discouraging me from upgrading is confusing to say the least.

Apple is losing their touch.

P.S. Fuck animojis. They are just another PR gimmick to sell iPhone's to Millennials and children.