

Abstract

“They’re watching you... with your full consent.” — Shoshana Zuboff (2019)

You have a chat with a friend about your newfound desire to save some money and make your own coffee at home. You go on about the high cost of chain coffees, and how you’re scared to look at your bank account, which is connected to an app strategically placed far away from your beloved Starbucks app that you’ve used multiple times this week. You think little of the conversation after leaving your friend, until you go on Facebook later that night. In the midst of your endless scroll, in between a coworker’s baby shower album and your cousin’s questionable political statement, you see some coffee beans. Confused, your thumb stops. It’s a sponsored post, and it’s about a website where you can buy your own beans to roast at home. Even better, the ad says this company only uses sustainably sourced, recycled materials, and you’re on an environmental kick right now, conveniently. You did just post about the bamboo utensil set you ordered from Amazon. The ad creeps you out, though, so you immediately screenshot and send it to your friend. Your friend thinks it’s perfect, and you should definitely order it. She just got an ad for a \$2 latte deal at Dunkin’, and wants to go tomorrow after lunch. You leave the coffee bean site open in your Safari app, and double check that you still have some money in your Dunkin’ account. The almost too convenient ad is quickly becoming a distant memory, as you open a new tab to search the opening hours of your nearby food store. The night goes on, and you continue scrolling.