

complaint is about how the ads affect the desires and the mind of the child. This issue about desires cannot be addressed solely by noting that parents can refuse to satisfy those desires. Rather, this issue forces us back to consideration of the relationship between desire and autonomy. What methods of influence are consistent with autonomy, fairness, and respect for the person?

It may be easy to see children as an especially vulnerable population. Reading 11.4, "Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights," is a proposed policy for the commercial use of data collected on consumers. We leave to you the task of analyzing particular items in the Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights and focus here on the more general idea of privacy and its value. You saw in Chapter 8 that privacy is a right that protects important human interests. One consequence when privacy is respected is that people are less subject to control and manipulation by others. In the context of consumers, strong privacy rights over personal data could help to prevent the accumulation and use of vast amounts of data about personal behavioral tendencies. The more we know about another person—about his or her desires, motivations, and psychology—the better position we are in to influence and manipulate his or her behavior. We all know that those with whom we are most intimate are effectively able to "push our buttons" and get a desired response. When companies are able to collect, store, and aggregate enormous volumes of data on each of us, they know us perhaps even better than our most intimate friends and can easily target us for pitches we are less likely to resist. Many advocates for stronger consumer privacy rules are concerned about the increasing ability of companies to electronically target us based on the detailed consumer profile they have developed for us individually. (See the Case Study on the casino loyalty card for a vivid example of this.) It is interesting to evaluate whether the specific rights proposed in this White House document collectively constitute any substantial protection against such powerful attempts to influence. For instance, it is worth reflecting on the details of a right to control over personal information. Most companies offer us choices about our data by presenting an opportunity to "opt out" of their data collection and use practices. Is such an "opt out" policy as effective as a policy that would require instead an affirmative choice to "opt in"? The proposed transparency rights might have prevented Google from exploiting a loophole in Apple's Safari web browser. Consumers thought they had blocked the placement of tracking cookies in Safari, but the loophole discovered by Google meant users were unknowingly being tracked by Google's advertisers even when they had taken steps to prevent such tracking. Reflect as well about the ease with which American consumers, especially young adults, surrender their data today.

### MARKETING, CONSUMERISM, AND VALUES

Galbraith's third proposition was that marketing has helped create an irrational economy that produces an abundance of trivial luxury goods at the expense of necessary public goods. This claim reminds us that even informed and voluntary exchanges might have undesirable social costs. This challenge is still heard today, more than ever.