Student Essay2 – example 1

 "I agree." Two small words that are easily overlooked while browsing the internet but can have a huge impact on the information presented online. Clicking the button implies that users understand that their information and interests are being shared with corporations that may not have their best interests in mind. Agreeing to the terms and conditions of websites means that the information entered could be monitored and recorded; this includes preferences, searches, and even personal data. This data is used at the discretion of the owners of the website however they see fit. This means that the information accumulated through various clicks online could help improve convenience for users or could be sold to other companies to advertise products. Some people consider this type of internet tracking to be an invasion of privacy because their data is being collected. However, people continue to click "I agree" to access information, shop online, and even do research without fully reading and understanding what they're agreeing to. **As online safety standards are improving, Internet tracking is a viable tool and is justified to improve the quality of an online experience**.

   How exactly is this information being collected? Through files called "Cookies". Chris Jay Hoofnagle, a professor of law and lecturer at Berkley explains, "A cookie is a small text file stored on a user's computer. Cookies are employed for a variety of reasons to enhance user's experience online, for example, by saving preferences or serving targeted content or advertisements." (5) Clicking the "I agree" button when entering websites allows for a cookie to be created pertaining to all the future information you insert into said website. For example, when logging into websites that are frequently used, often the "remember me" option has been checked previously allowing the user quicker access without having to re-enter a username and password. This information has been stored in a cookie on the computer for that particular website. Tracking data for this purpose creates a reliable and convenient resource that's very beneficial. My Grandmother benefits from this every time she logs into her computer and goes shopping for her grandkids. Memorizing every password and username can be a hassle, especially for older generations that aren't "tech savvy" because finding the search bar is hard enough. Younger generations do benefit from cookies online, through streaming services. While watching YouTube, Netflix, or Disney Plus, shows and videos that were started, completed, or even disliked are all stored in cookies. These cookies can be used to create a personal profile that will recommend other shows for that particular user. It also remembers where users stopped watching in order to pick up right where they left off. These minor details often go unnoticed but are a benefit of internet tracking.

   Similar to streaming services using internet tracking, corporations can use the data in order to advertise products that are targeted towards a particular user and their past purchases and searches. Kasia Odrozek, director of the Mozilla Insight Team and data researcher states, "Online advertising is nearly inescapable, especially on social networks and media sites. There's a logic to this: it is the main way that most online enterprises and publications sustain themselves" (1), but "Not all online advertising is bad. On the upside, online tracking should deliver you more useful, relevant ads." (1) Internet tracking allows for a tailored personal experience for each individual user. While googling items such as headphones, results will display advertisements

for headphones from multiple retail stores first. This gives users options and prices quickly and conveniently which can allow for a positive shopping experience. Compared to trying to memorize competitors' pricing and other factors while shopping, cookies allow for an easy experience online. Social media also uses cookies in order to advertise similar posts to what individual users have liked prior. For example, my friend Dylan, a golfer for Felician College, constantly sends me posts relating to golf. From people driving golf carts into the ponds to practical jokes on the course, his social media feed is filled with content he is interested in. He never had to look up these posts because they were recommended after he initially liked one. Cookies can be used in various ways in order to advertise benefiting both the consumer and the corporation.

Internet tracking does have room to improve, especially when it comes to safety and privacy while browsing online. Gregory S. Gaglione Jr. a Buffalo lawyer and counselor on data privacy and cybersecurity claimed, "In total, over 2.5 billion records were compromised in publicly disclosed data breaches in 2017… However, even though there has been a substantial increase in data breaches over the past few years, the legal system has not evolved to provide protections for consumers" (1-2) Safety online has been a challenge for companies, but more standard regulations are being implemented giving users confidence in the websites they are accessing. The United States currently doesn't have any standard laws that protect users from companies collecting data without their consent. This means that companies can access personal information and 'leak' data to advertising companies in order to make more money. Currently, the European Union (EU) has taken steps to create laws that enforce websites to disclaim that their information is going to be tracked and used by corporations. Adrian Dabrowski a postdoctoral researcher at the University of California, Irvine describes that, "In response, the European Union has adopted the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), a legislative framework for data protection empowering individuals to control their data." (1) In contrast, Gregory Gaglione's research states the U.S. currently has separate statutes in place in each state that govern data privacy laws making it difficult for companies to adhere to every law and protect consumers. (5) Creating laws that regulate internet tracking is difficult; however, countries are taking steps to improve this and protect consumer privacy and data. Johnathan Mayer an assistant professor at Princeton University, former technology law and policy advisor to US Senator Kamala Harris, and Chief technologist for the FCC states that "The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is the leading federal regulatory and law enforcement agency for consumer protection… has been particularly vocal on web tracking; since late 2010 commissioners and staff have consistently called for a Do Not Track consumer choice mechanism that is universal." (1) A Do Not Track option would allow consumers to deny companies to save any personal information. This law is still under debate however, the protection of information is reliant on consumers' knowledge of safety concerns while online.

"Knowledge is power" users have to understand the terms and conditions of the data that is being collected in order to enhance and personalize their browsing experience. As more regulations are implemented, users will have greater control over the data being collected by corporations. A world without internet tracking would make marketing and advertising become extremely difficult and make the user's experience less intimate. Without internet tracking,

products would be displayed randomly, and would anyone really want to learn about toilet paper products while watching videos on how to bake cookies? Internet tracking definitely has its advantages. Do you agree?

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Student Essay2 – example 2

As an African American woman living in America there is a multitude of discrimination that I have experienced throughout my life. Being followed around the store and accused of stealing. Having people cross the road when they see me. Seeing women grab their children's hands in fear when I walk by. Being unable to apply to my dream university because so many people like me feel unwelcome there. Being unable to meet my boyfriend's parents because they'll shut me out for something I can't change. It doesn't matter that I'm a daughter, or a sister, or a student with a bright future, or barely an adult, because I am black first. Many black people go through the same thing, and this is the first thing many people think of when the black American experience is mentioned. Despite this, I can say I'm glad I was born during this time. My friend group is very diverse. In most places I feel like I belong. I am able to get the education that my grandparents dreamed of. **Given the immense amount of progress the United States has made, it is safe to say Martin Luther King Jr.'s dreams for equality are being brought to fruition.**

There are various ways in which discrimination against black people is being combatted. Upon being hired to Panera Bread two years ago, I had to complete discrimination training. There were requirements to watch videos and take quizzes to promote education on microaggression, diversity, and inclusion. Periodically the crew is required to re-watch these videos. Shown at other work places, this can help combat ignorance and intolerance not only at work but in other spaces. The United Nations, a peacemaking intergovernmental organization has a list of actions that countries worldwide are taking to fight discrimination against black people. They have several goals for 2030. Some include "inclusive and quality education" to "promote lifelong opportunities for all", lower racial inequality around the world, "[promoting] peaceful and inclusive societies", holding people accountable, and serving justice. United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization (UNESCO) created a guide to help preserve the history of slavery and its artifacts as well as content to educate on black history("Actions Taken"). There is collective data to understand black people and patterns of discrimination. All of these can over time help combat deep-rooted prejudice within our society.

Black people who are being treated unfairly are receiving more justice than they would've years ago. Black Lives Matter (BLM), a movement founded to combat the injustices against African Americans, has become incredibly popular. It is "the largest Black, abolitionist, philanthropic organization to have ever existed in this nation's history" and lead by three board members with an "extensive background of social justice work". The organization is well funded with many donors ("Black Lives Matter"). The website itself helps educate on the BLM movement, allows users speak to the founders, and encourages users to take action in regards to fighting the injustices against black people. There are current news links regarding the injustices black people face and even links to help users register to vote in order to maximize the amount of black voices heard. Police brutality rates are lowering. Mappingpoliceviolence.org uses data collected from various articles around google about deaths by police brutality, and has a few researchers on the site such as Reed T. DeAngelis who is a sociology major that works at the Carolina Population Control Center. It gives a lot of good statistics about the injustices that black people have faced in regards to police brutality. It notes that 84 fewer black people have been killed in April 2022 compared to April 2021 ("Mapping Police Violence"). Change.org is another website that helps promote justice by hosting a lot of petitions/donors and bringing awareness in regards to these issues. For example, the petition for justice George Floyd got over 19.5 million signatures, and helped educate people on the cause (Change). If it weren't for websites and organizations like these, the public would remain ignorant and injustices against black people would continue to prevail.

Resources are available that help give black people greater chances to succeed. Education is incredibly important to success and was a large part of the civil rights movement. Community college and financial aid make it easier for black people to get cheap and good quality education after high school. Certain universities have affirmative action put in place to avoid discrimination. This means that schools that were proven to discriminate against certain minority groups at one point have to meet a certain number of students from those minorities for admission ("Affirmative Action"). This helps black people have a chance at any university without worry about being rejected because of their race. This also gives them opportunities at prestigious ivy league colleges. Harvard's admission for the 2026 class was about 60% people of color, 15% of which were black. They meet "100% of financial need" ("Admission Statistics") so students who have been admitted that can't afford the education will be covered. There is a

page on the Harvard website regarding inclusion and diversity. It has an abundance of resources and clubs to help all kinds of students feel like they belong and feel more secure. There are a lot of black people in powerful positions, which wouldn't have been seen in the past. Barack Obama was America's first black president, and he served from 2008-2016. Kamala Harris is the first black woman vice president, elected in 2022. Raphael Warnock is the first black senator in Georgia starting January 2021, and Cori Bush became Missouri's first black congress woman the same year (Connley). These people are living proof that black people have the ability and opportunity to succeed in society today.

The civil rights act was passed 100 years after slavery was abolished. It is unrealistic to expect that 60 years after the civil rights movement ended there would be complete equality. Martin Luther King Jr had a dream that black and white children could play together, that black and white men could consider each other brothers, and that black people would receive the freedom and justice they deserved. Yes, there is still a long way to go for African Americans in terms of equal treatment, but what matters most is the fact that we're moving forward. It is easy to see all of the bad things happening in the media and to feel as if we're moving backwards in regards to inclusivity of people of color, but instead of focusing on the negative take into consideration all of the ways America has advanced.

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