

Privacy on the Web:
How a User's Actions Can Affect Their Privacy

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Privacy Expectations

Since the rapid use of technology, privacy has become a major topic of concern. When clicking on a website or even social media, you are asked if you accept the cookies or if you are asked to create an account that takes personal information. Many do not pay attention to the information they are sharing or the privacy policies involved in this interaction. The details of the privacy policies do tend to vary by the company as to which product it is being used for, such as a website or social media. Not paying any mind to the items being clicked or the information being asked for, if it pertains to what is trying to be achieved, can invade one's privacy more than expected.

Terms Used Online

Some terms used throughout the internet can confuse users, as they do not know what they are agreeing to. Many consumers are not sure how their data is used, and some think that no matter what, it is impossible to go through daily life without data being collected on them. Since the widespread use of technology, many say they believe their privacy has decreased. In a survey done by the Pew Research Center, only 1 in 5 people read the privacy policy when prompted by the website or organization. In the same study, 22% said they read the Terms and Conditions all the way through. Overall, 63% of Americans say they do not understand or know very little about the laws and regulations regarding their privacy. All of the items play an intricate part in the privacy of individuals online. The main topics of concern when regarding these items are cookies, privacy policies, and the terms and conditions.

Cookies.

Cookies are data collected by the website and stored for future sessions. Many types of cookies exist, but the main five are permanent cookies, session cookies, first-party cookies, third-party cookies, and secure cookies. HTTP cookies cover all the main types of cookies and make all cookies HTTP ones.

Session cookies can be referred to as temporary due to only retaining information while they are on that given website. Shopping websites are the most common domain to use this type because, as soon as the tab or browser is closed, the cookies are deleted. Permanent cookies retain the data even after the browser is closed and can be stored for up to 12 months, which is the law's maximum limit. The main types of cookies noticed are the pop-up ones that ask to collect information for language preferences, allow the owner to see web traffic, and collect information on user experience, all of which relate to first-party cookies. Third-party cookies are third-party providers collecting information for research or behavior purposes. This allows advertising to reach the right demographic. Lastly, secure cookies apply to the website deemed secure and only allow data to be sent encrypted, making it uneasy for hackers to access the information.

Terms and Conditions.

Terms and conditions are items agreed to when accessing a site. Almost all sites have terms and conditions to protect them from legal risks. When using TikTok, the popular app for videos where many people worldwide post videos, a terms and conditions screen pops up. Each time the terms and conditions change, a new pop-up will occur where you cannot continue unless

you agree to the new terms. Even when a terms and conditions page does not pop up when accessing the site or application by using or reading the document or watching videos, the terms and conditions agreement is implied. The most common topic discussed in terms and conditions is what the service is, who has the right to access it, the rights of all parties, limitations or liabilities, property rights, laws and rejection resolutions, and information about the organization.

Two words associated with terms and conditions are browsewrap agreement, or browse-wrap license, and clickwrap agreement. A browsewrap agreement does not require the user to act, and the implied consent mentioned before applies. This type of agreement can be controversial if confirmation or action is not taken to agree. Courts tend to find this topic based on whether the website states that by continuing to scroll, you automatically agree. A click-wrap agreement is primarily done through software or electronic media. This applies to the example used before, such as TikTok, where you must act and agree to be able to use the application, but it is also used greatly for purchases on the web.

Privacy Policy.

A privacy policy is different from terms and conditions that many users online are not aware of. A privacy policy is required to honor the data protection laws in place. One big difference between the two is the fact that a privacy policy is not an agreement between the owner and the user. This policy just informs the user of what is being done with their information online. A privacy law does not have to be agreed upon, if the user is not happy with the practice a business uses, they are not forced to continue. No information is forced by the organization for the user to give up, and if the user continues, it is due to their agreement. Most privacy policies contain what data is being collected, why the information is collected, how the data is gathered,

who the contents are shared with, subject rights, where data is sent to, and who is collecting such things.

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