

Master Research Proposal

Topic Create and evaluate an alternative design to a Privacy Policy Long Text for personal health data.

Background:

Online privacy policies intend to inform users about how personal data is processed in the given digital service and assist to make informed decisions about what to share. However, current policies lack usability while confronting users with long text, filled with technical and legal terms at an advanced reading level [1]. As a result, most users skip those texts or spend very little time looking at them, even as they consent to them [2].

Studies have shown that making privacy information more salient at the point of decision making can influence the decisions users make regarding which software to download or website to purchase from [3]. Nevertheless, more education is required to enable users to understand data processing mechanisms and possible consequences of their service usage.

Especially with sensitive personal data,

A currently discussed topic in HCI research is how to build alternative representation formats without replacing the legally binding privacy policy itself. Therefore, other disciplines that found solutions to summarize information can be considered for a visual summary (e.g., nutrition label, badges, etc.).

Research Questions (to be further defined and refined):

- What are alternative privacy policy representation, that are reported in current literature and which limitations do they have?
- Which limitations do these privacy policies representations encounter and what are possible strategies to overcome these?
- How can an alternative design look like and how do possible users evaluate it?

The proposed work consists of the following parts:

- Literature research: identify relevant studies and researched evidence for an alternative privacy policy representation (taking GDPR into account)
- Identify reported limitations from the literature results within the context of personal health data
- Create a HTML prototype for an alternative privacy policy representation taking conclusions from the literature research into account
- Pilot Study: evaluate the created visualization with possible users

Supervisors:

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References:

[1] Bowyer, Alex & Holt, Jack & Go Jefferies, Josephine & Wilson, Rob & Kirk, David & Smeddinck, Jan. (2022). Human-GDPR Interaction: Practical Experiences of Accessing Personal Data. 1-19. 10.1145/3491102.3501947.

[2] Madiha Tabassum, Abdulmajeed Alqhatani, Marran Aldossari, and Heather Richter Lipford. 2018. Increasing User Attention with a Comic-Based Policy. In Proceedings of the 2018 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (Montreal QC, Canada) (CHI '18). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3173574.3173774>

[3] Daniel Reinhardt, Johannes Borchard, and Jörn Hurtienne. 2021. Visual Interactive Privacy Policy: The Better Choice? In Proceedings of the 2021 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '21). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, Article 66, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3411764.3445465>

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