

What's the Big Deal About Internet Privacy?

Directions

It's a good idea to check a website's privacy policy before using the site. Look for the words "Privacy" or "Privacy Policy" at the bottom of the home page. Here are some terms you're likely to find in privacy policy notices. Check off the terms you find on your site, and answer the following questions.

- Personally Identifiable Information:** This includes information that reveals who you are in the offline world, including your real name, address, email address, phone number, age, or school.

Does your site collect personally identifiable information? Yes _____ No _____

If so, what kinds?

- Cookies:** Cookies are small computer text files placed in your computer by the sites you visit. These files contain numbers to identify your computer. Cookies can also identify you by any personally identifiable information you may have given to the site.

A cookie records the date and time you visited the site and how long you stayed. It also records which webpages and ads you viewed. The next time you return, the site can present content and ads designed just for you. Many privacy policies include information about the sites' cookies.

Does your site use cookies? Yes _____ No _____ It doesn't say _____

- Third Party:** The word "party" is a legal term for an individual or a company. You (the visitor) are the first party. The site owner is the second party. Any other person or company is the third party.

Most people don't mind sharing information about themselves with site owners to get better service. However, many people DO NOT want their information passed to a third party without their knowledge. A site's privacy policy should tell you if the owner shares your information with third parties.

Does your site share information with third parties?

Yes _____ No _____ It doesn't say _____

Privacy Options: Many sites give you choices about what they do with the information they collect about you. For example, you can tell the site they are not allowed to share their information with a third party.

Does your site offer privacy options? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, what are they?

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1. Tavian visits a new website. Before Tavian can explore the site, he is asked to fill in his date of birth and the name of his school. Tavian doesn't feel comfortable giving that information. Tavian could:

- a) Leave the site
- b) Ask an adult to look at the site and read its privacy policy with him
- c) Both a and b

2. _____ means someone who can't be identified based on the information you have.

- a) Well known
- b) Anonymous
- c) Guilty

3. True or false: Websites that are targeted at kids are required to post privacy policies.

- a) True
- b) False

Respond to the following questions about Privacy Policies using the information you have learned:

Do you mind that the site collects information about you? Why or why not?

Does it make a difference what kind of information your site collects about you?

What do you get in return for the information? Is the exchange worth it to you?