

Products being reviewed: Codespark.com vs. Code.org

Both of these products are intended for use by young learners to learn block-based coding.

Codespark.com Policy: <https://codespark.com/privacy>

Information collected by Codespark:

Codespark collects the administrator's or educator's name, email address, school name and city. They also use third party analytics that use cookies or web beacons to serve ads based on someone's prior web browsing history to then show ads and other reminders that you visited. Additionally, they collect information about internet browsing, such as your ISP and the browser you used to visit the site.

Code.org Policy: <https://code.org/privacy>

Information collected by Code.org:

They do collect age (not birthdate) upon sign up. They also collect gender and race data upon sign up, however, these are optional. Young students, however, may not understand this. Further, they collect optional information about district and school name.

Compare/Contrast

At first glance, it seems that both companies have altruistic motivations which are generally reflected in their data collection practices and privacy policies. In both policies, they explicitly state how the collection of personal information is only in service of providing a good user experience for children.

For example, Codespark states that "During registration they ask only for the barest minimum of information from an adult teacher or parent.". They also share the following statement "From our children student users (under 13), the Services will never require full names or addresses; we ask only for a generic user name, which can be a nickname or a first name. They let users know that they are compliant with FERPA and COPPA. Two of the major laws protecting children's data privacy rights. Furthermore, they share that users "have the right to request a copy to review and delete the information We have collected about you at any time." They also tell users that "The Services do not include any pop up ads or other third party advertisements." Finally, they provide even more privacy protections for school accounts, expressing that "For

school accounts: CodeSpark will not sell or lease any student data for any advertising, marketing, or other purposes.”.

Code.org seems equally if not more committed to protecting users' privacy. They share how they do not sell your personal information or exploit it for financial gain and do not sell ads. They state that they established themselves as a not-for-profit organization so that a for-profit motive will not interfere with their mission of providing a trusted educational resource. Their privacy policy details how they only store a one-way hash of the student email addresses if they are provided, which means they do not have any way of retrieving a student's actual email address from their account. They go further than Code.org, by allowing access to their courses without requiring log-in or requiring you to provide any personal information in order to try our courses, stating that they only collect your IP address.

Although both companies seem dedicated to protecting user's private data and collecting as little of it as possible, it seems like Code.org might be slightly better at this since one can use their product without creating a user account. After having read the article shared with us, titled "How unique am I?" I wonder if some of the data collected, which at first may seem innocuous, could be correlated with other info. on other sites, which could ultimately be used to identify and or locate students.