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Article Summary

# Apple’s “Privacy Policy”

Technological informational privacy has become a rapidly debated topic as of recently and has created a plethora of controversial ideas, views, and claims. This is seen the most with mobile and home devices, such as smartphones like Android and iPhones, as well as smart speakers, like the Google Home and Amazon Echo. I would like to focus more on privacy pertaining to mobile devices, specifically iPhones.

Only 3 months ago, very disturbing information was disclosed about Apple’s use of their consumer’s data; actually, I should say third-party use of that data. According to The Guardian, whose articles were later confirmed, Apple was giving “random Siri recordings” to third-party contractors, who were listening to and “grading” the recordings to test for the accuracy of Siri’s responses. The types of conversations heard in those recordings are both disturbing and gross. Not only that, but this activity is not disclosed in Apple’s privacy policy, meaning consumers are not giving consent for their data to be used in this way.

Two months later, The Guardian posted another article. This one was about Apple’s alleged apology about the way they were allowing consumers’ data to be used. To summarize, Apple apologized, saying “As we previously announced, we halted the Siri grading program. We plan to resume later this fall when software updates are released to our users.” The “software updates” spoken of contain measures of giving more freedom as to what information is being shared with Apple and what they can do with it.

The issue still stands, even if Apple is now more open about what they’re doing with the data, does that make it right? Apple went an unknown amount of time doing this without anyone finding out. As a company that claims they care first and foremost about users’ privacy, using that almost as a marketing tool, it’s worrying to find out that a company that large is still doing that. Even with their apology, I want to explore the ethical implications of Apple’s activity, what should and shouldn’t be permitted and disclosed, and how this situation applies to the whole of informational security.