

Assignment 3: Privacy

1. Information Presentation Response

In response to one of the information presentation videos, write a 3-5 sentence response to the following prompt:

1. Compare an average student taking this course 10 years ago, an average student in this course now, and a hypothetical average student in this course in 10 years: Who is the most concerned about their digital privacy? Who is the least concerned? Why?

2. Much Ado About Leaking

You have recently been hired as a developer by the Ultimate Totally Secure Chat (UTSC) app. It's a small team of developers, but a very fast growing app, and you're in on the ground floor with what you think could be the next big social media app. Your job doesn't have anything to do with security, but in your role as a developer you come across a security vulnerability that could theoretically allow malicious actors to access all messages, files, photos and videos shared by your users.

You immediately bring your concerns to the lead developers/founders/owners: Zark Muckerberg and Beff Jezos. The following conversation ensues:

Zark: We can't tell anyone about this. Don't let anyone know about it, we'll patch the security vulnerability ASAP and no one needs to be any the wiser.

Beff: No way. We need to come clean right away. Our data shows that not all of our users install updates right away, so even if we get a patch out immediately, our users may be vulnerable for a long time if we don't warn them.

Zark: Making it public will just tell the hackers that we've got a vulnerability they can exploit. We haven't had any problems so far, but that's mostly because we're new and small enough to not attract attention. If we tell the world that all our data is vulnerable, we're just asking to be hacked.

Beff: But if our users find out we knew about a vulnerability and didn't tell them, we'll be done for, we might as well close up shop.

Zark: If we make a public announcement that all our users' data is vulnerable, we won't be much better off.

You're the third person in the room, so they both look to you for your input to help them resolve this stalemate. What do you do? Who do you side with? What advice do you give? Who are the stakeholders? And how to you weigh their various concerns?

In 500-700 words, give your response to Zark and Beff. Make sure to think about the issues we've discussed in class such as ethics and privacy. Since this is just a conversation, you can write informally and either address Zark and Beff directly, or write it in more of a journalistic ("I would do this") style.

3. The CPPA And Internet Privacy in Canada

The Canadian government is currently considering the bill "Consumer Privacy Protection Act". This bill will completely destroy the internet in Canada as we know it, or else it will save us from being ruined by social media, or maybe it will be completely ignored because it isn't strong enough, or maybe it will lead to an authoritarian government because it's far too over-reaching.

The bill itself covers dozens of topics over hundreds of pages, so we won't expect you to read the whole thing (though feel free if you've got the time). CitizenLab has made a summary explainer that can be found at <https://citizenlab.ca/2021/04/bill-c-11-explained/>. But you shouldn't take their report at face value (even if they are affiliated with University of Toronto). You'll want to check out the proponents as well as the opponents of the bill to see what they have to say.

Your job isn't to provide your personal opinion on the bill, but rather to research and summarize the opinions and predictions of others. Who is saying what about this bill and why?

Yes, the official title is: "An Act to enact the Consumer Privacy Protection Act, the Personal Information and Data Protection Tribunal Act and the Artificial Intelligence and Data Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts", but we didn't want you to be over your wordcount for the assignment just by mentioning the name of the bill

Confusingly, the bill is no longer bill C-11, it's now bill C-27, and this parliament's bill C-11 focuses on copyright of streaming content, and thus has generated a lot more media attention than the old bill C-11, so the lesson here is: give things names not numbers