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Individual Systems Theory and Ethics

A retailer selling your personal information to others for profit

Ethical Quandary	Hardware	Software	Consent pop-up window (software)	Organizational policies & rules	National laws & regulations
Is the customer asked before their information is sold?		X	X	X	X
Is the customer informed what personal information will be sold?		X	X	X	X
Is the information anonymous?	X	X		X	X
What are the buyers intending to do with the information?				X	X

Summary of chart:

This grid summarizes the main ethical questions that might come about if a retailer is selling your personal information to others for profit. It looks at what systems the question might be implemented/answered in. For example one of the ethical quandaries is if a customer will be asked before their information is sold. The answer to this question would be based upon components implemented in the software as a whole, more specifically a consent pop-up window that would be the first thing available before the page opens. Organizational and national policies/laws would also play a role in if this is required to be implemented in the software. If there is an organizational or national policy/law then the software must implement some way to get the customer's consent before selling their information, otherwise it would be considered unethical.

The question of whether it is ethical for a retailer to sell personal information is a widely observed topic today with so much information being accessed by websites and organizations based on internet use. Laws and practices differ between countries, so it is important that retailers are making sure they know not only what is most ethical, but what is legal based on

what the country or organization believes is ethical. Many websites already have standards in place to combat ethical problems, such as pop-up windows, checkbox questionnaires, and other measures. Information autonomy is something that many believe is the most crucial step of selling personal data, as there is no way to harm a person based on their data if it has no ties to them. What the buyers intend to do with the data should also be questioned because there is a large difference between selling to a buyer who has good intentions and selling to a buyer who you know has bad intentions.