

Scytale

by Nebula Interactive

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Scytale

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THIS PROJECT IS NOT
LIVE

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Introduction

The vast majority of the people just press the “I accept” on all the privacy policies, terms of use and end-user-license-agreements without even reading what they say. And we all understand why, if you were to read the privacy policies alone, it would take 40 minutes out of every day and the layouts and use of vocabulary make it hard to understand. So that even if you do read the policies, you hardly know what it says. With these facts programs and services trick you into accepting their user agreement without even reading what you are accepting to. In 2010 GameStation temporarily added a clause to its online sales contract claiming that GameStation now owns their souls. If users did not agree to this they were given the option to opt-out and receive a £5 voucher, only 12% of the users made use of this option. In this case GameStation used it as an April fools prank, but the prank was meant to illustrate the problems with the fine print in clickwrap license agreements that allow companies to hide conditions from their customers.

Five years later a lot of users are still not aware to the things they are agreeing to in the privacy policies. After understanding the privacy policies users share a considerable amount of frustration and discomfort, sometimes outrage, with how little they know about their privacy online and what little they can do to control it. Scytale offers a solution to this problem, Scytale will help users to translate these big dreadful bodies of text into a couple of easy to understand icons and lines of text. Reducing the 40 minutes you would spend on reading privacy policies to some mere minutes. On top of this the program can also provide a list of similar programs and their policies. So that users can compare the policies from different services.

Under the Hood

Solution

To drastically increase the percentage of people that read policies and licenses their behaviour has to change. Lessig(1999) describes four distinct but independent constraints, which he calls “modalities”, for regulating behaviour. These four modalities are law, norms, market and architecture. Law regulates behaviour by sanctions that can enforced by the government. Norms regulate behaviour by social conventions that one often feels compelled to follow. Market can change behaviour by the means of economic forces. Lastly, architecture influences behaviour by the physical or technical constraints on activities. Scytale will help people change their behaviour by changing the architecture. At the current state there are two major flaws that prevent people from reading policies and licenses. To fix these flaws the following changes should be made to the architecture. Firstly, the policies need to be made understandable and the readability needs to increase significantly. So that consumers understand what they are reading and are no longer discouraged from reading privacy policies. Secondly, the time it takes to read these policies should be reduced from 40 minutes a day to a maximum of a couple of

How does it work?

To decrease the time one spends reading policies on a day we propose to have a database which will contain summaries from policies and agreements. These summaries are translated into a set of icons. To increase the effectiveness of the icons the following points will be taken into account. Firstly, the familiarity is one of the most important predictors of speed and accuracy of icon processing. Secondly, visually simple icons tend to be preferred or rated more highly on appeal than visually complex ones.

The use of icons should solve both problems. The icons are easy to understand and not ambiguous. Since the policies are already translated to this set of icons which are representable for the policy, users no longer have to read the whole policy and therefore decrease the reading time significantly.

The way this information is made available is through the means of a browser addon. This allows the program to run on the background and only kicks in when the user

Pledge €1 or more

0 backers

Every Euro makes a difference. We will personally thank you in a thank you email from the development crew. We will keep you posted about our progress by email, and you will receive the 'bronze backer' on your Scytale account.

Estimated delivery: May 2015

Pledge €20 or more

0 backers

Get access to Scytale before the public does! With this package you will get an invitation to the closed beta of Scytale. On top of this you will receive the 'Silver Backer' on your Scytale account.

Estimated delivery: Mar 2016

Pledge €50 or more

0 backers

With this package you will be one of the first to have Scytale on your PC. With this package you will get access to the alpha. On top of this you will receive the 'Gold Backer' badge on your Scytale account.

Estimated delivery: Nov 2015

Pledge €100 or more

0 backers

Limited (15 left of 15)

You can add a website to the list of initial translations! On top of this, get access to the alpha, receive 'Gold Backer' badge on your Scytale account.

Estimated delivery: Nov 2015

Pledge €250 or more

0 backers

Limited (5 left of 5)

Get an online session together with the developers, in which you can discuss and see the progress made so far. On top of this you will get access to the alpha, receive the 'Platinum Backer' badge on your Scytale account and you can add a website to the list of initial translations!

Estimated delivery: Nov 2015

comes across a policy or agreement. The addon will look up the policy in question in our database and then replace the huge body of text by the set of icons. Users will also still be able to view the original policy, with the sections highlighted on which the icons are based. In case the policy in question is not yet translated the user can submit a translation to the database.



Transformation done by the program with possible icons and a possible selection of information.

Contributions

For users it is essential that the database contains as much translations as possible for the services users use. So instead of paying a monthly subscription fee we ask users to contribute to the database by translating a certain amount of policies a month. We hope this results in a growing and up-to-date database. In our vision this is the only way to ensure the quantity this project needs, since there is an enormous amount of policies and agreements. And is it not a small price to pay? Instead of having to read all privacy policies yourself, you can now read a few and have the rest read for you.

The quality of the information in the database will be protected by various methods. Firstly, we will develop a text interpreter. So that all policies and agreements can be checked by machine. We suspect however that these translations might not be flawless and unable to notice its own mistakes. Therefore all translations provided by this will be compared to translations from contributors. Comparing the translations from multiple contributors and the machine translation should give pretty accurate results. This should also detect contributors who contribute untruthful information.

Stretch Goals


We need your help to reach these goals!

- [LOCKED] €25,000 - 1,500 initial websites
- [LOCKED] €30,000 - 3,000 initial websites
- [LOCKED] €40.000 - Besides the icons a list of opt-out cookies will be supplied

Background Story

The main source of inspiration for this product comes from a documentary called ‘Terms and conditions may apply’. This is a documentary that exposes what corporations and governments learn about people through internet and cell phone usage. Before watching this documentary I was certainly not ignorant about privacy on the web and often took precautions to protect my privacy, but this documentary was a real eye-opener on how the problem we face today was created and what people have interest in this problem. If I was this unaware of what is going, there must be many more out there who know even less or are utterly unaware of what is going on. This gave me the idea to start actually reading privacy policies to understand what I am agreeing to. So I’d stop playing on their terms. However this took up enormous amounts of time. Which in turn sparked this idea. A community effort to help users understand what is going on and make people aware. Because as long as people are not aware nothing is likely to change. A lecture about privacy also pulled my interests to this topic. Privacy was explained in the following way,

Pledge €1,000 or more

 **0 backers**

Limited (3 left of 3)

Thank you for realising this product, by pledging this amount you will get your name in the credits list of the program. On top of this you will get access to the alpha, receive the 'Platinum Backer' badge on your Scytale account and you can add a website to the list of initial translations!

Estimated delivery: Nov 2015

privacy is closely intertwined with expectations. If someone walks into the computer lab and sees you using a computer, your privacy is lost but not violated. You can expect someone to walk in on you using a computer in this public space. However if someone peeps through the keyhole of your apartment door and sees you using a computer, your privacy is not only lost but is also violated. In these two examples you can make a clear distinction between the two cases. However if you move this to the virtual domain things get more difficult. How does this work on the internet? One thing is certain, privacy is lost very quickly on the internet and perhaps can even be considered as violated because users are unaware of what is going on. However users agree with this when accepting the privacy policy and therefore could have known. By raising the awareness of people, it might change the mindset of just accepting, and might even help us to stand up against the most violating uses of the big data collection. Instead of being ignorant and just keep on pressing 'I accept'.

Licensing Information

Since Scytale is all about privacy we at Nebula Interactive, want to be as transparent as possible. Therefore we divided Scytale into two compartments. A licensed part, and an open source part. The licensed part exists out of a data library(database) which contains all translations. The open part exists out of the rest.

The reason why the whole product is not open source is for the fact that users need to contribute to the database. If the whole project were to be open source, there would be no way to make sure that all users contribute to the database. Thus risking the system to become outdated. The data library will be obtainable under a subscription. Users can get a subscription by contributing to the database.

The rest of the product is made open source to reflect our privacy policy. Since Scytale is all about regaining privacy. We, Nebula Interactive, should not hide anything from the costumers. On top of this, making it open source could offer the potential for a more flexible technology and quicker innovation. [The four top reasons why individuals or organizations choose open source software are; lower costs, security, no vendor 'lock in' and better quality](#). We share this vision. The open source license that is deployed imposes some obligations, modifications to the code that are distributed must be made available in source code form. This is done in order to make sure that the platform can keep on progressing from contributions.

Risk and Challenges

One of the biggest factors that influence the success of this project is the number of translated policies and agreements that is present in the database. Since this will determine the value of the product provided to the costumers. If there are no translations available Scytale would be of no use to customers. Therefore we will translate the first 1,000 policies. [Which will contain the most popular English websites and web services](#). The number of initial translations can be raised by reaching stretch goals. Another method to keep our database growing is the subscription method used by this product. In order for people to maintain their subscription they need to contribute to the database.

Another challenge is to ensure the validity of the information contributed by individual users. Policies and licenses often don't fully explain their topics in a way users can understand them. [A research survey has shown that users understand complex documents from governments and banks much better than the privacy policies of Facebook and Google](#). Therefore it would be ignorant to assume all translations will be error free and thus, we cannot guarantee flawless free summaries. However we will do our best to provide the best translation possible. To achieve this multiple safeguards are set into play. The first measure: a translation will never come from just one source. Every translated policy or agreement will be translated by an algorithm created by us. On top of this the policies will be and agreements will be checked by multiple contributors. By doing this intentional incorrect translations should be noticed, and can be taken care of by banning the untruthful contributor from the system. It is also possible that unintentional incorrect data is entered in the system, especially for inexperienced

users. To minimize this influence the system will distribute translations in such a way that one is never only checked by new or inexperienced users.

FAQ

What if mistranslations still make it through?

It is virtually impossible to guarantee that the system will provide mistake free translations. Especially with the large number of translations the platform is aiming at. We are taking however a large amount of measurements to minimize the chance of mistranslations. In the occasion that a mistranslation occurs you need to ask yourself the question is this really so bad compared to the current situation? At the moment the majority of the users are not reading the agreements at all. Scytale changes that, all the users have a sense of what they are agreeing to and in the vast majority of the cases this information is accurate. In the occasion that an aspect of a policy or agreement is not correctly translated, it is still an improvement to the case in which nothing of the policy in question was read by the user. Besides this users can still access the 'raw' policy with highlighted sections on which the current summary is based.

Who is responsible for a mistranslation?

The question above explains the fact that incorrect translations can exist within the program, but who is responsible for these mistakes? The causal responsibility of an incorrect translation lays with corporations and the contributors, because these two factors led to the mistranslation. Companies provide hard to read policies and agreements and the contributor misinterpreted them. [However it can be really easy for a reader to misinterpreted privacy policies](#). Therefore the contributor can not be held morally responsible. Nebula Interactive will take moral responsibility for a mistranslation from the moment the mistranslation is known by us. A mistranslation can be reported through the addon itself or on our website. When a mistranslation is not known to us we will not take moral responsibility for this. As explained above we simply cannot deliver a flawless, error-free system and upon using our program a user should accept this. This is clearly communicated to the user during setup / signup of the service. If a translation is ready to be published we contact the company or website in question and provide them with the opportunity to review our translation. The company can check if the translation is in-line with their policy. If this is not the case it can be communicated to us and the translation will be reviewed. This should make the companies in question feel morally responsible. As the service grows and becomes more well known, companies might be pressed through (social) media to participate actively.

Legal responsibility in this matter is complex, and is often decided depending on the case. [However the terms of the contract have usually been upheld in the USA](#), this is without this product.

By providing a comparison between products, won't you affect the decision making of customers?

The comparison might indeed be a reason for customers to switch from product or service they are planning to use. [Using utilitarian reasoning, an act, X, is morally permissible if the consequences of following the general rule \(Y\), of which act X is an instance, would bring the greatest good for the greatest number](#). In this case rule Y would be all customers would switch because of this program and X would be; I, as a customer would switch because of the comparison. If all customers decide to switch from one service to another, they do this because they are more satisfied with the policy or agreement of the other company. Thus, providing the customers with more satisfaction and the new company with positive utility because they have new customers. A negative consequence is the fact that the company which the customers initially were interested in loses all new customers. Rule Y makes the greatest amount of people happy, therefore act X is morally right. On top of this companies created these policies and agreements themselves and can change them if they wish to do so. Therefore they can influence market operations.

