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BSIT 4C

Task Performance: Online Privacy

Procedures:

1. Choose a product/tool from the list below to evaluate.

- I have chosen DuckDuckGo (Search Engine) from the choices, a tool to prevent behavior tracking.

2. In your evaluation, use:

a. The explanation provided by the producer of the product;

Based on what the producer stated in the DuckDuckGo Help Page, DuckDuckGo is an independent company that protects people's personal information online. Unlike Google or Chrome, it does not track searches or browsing history and has built-in features like ad tracker blocking, cookie blocking, smarter encryption, and app tracking protection. The producer explains that the best way to protect privacy is to stop personal data from being collected. DuckDuckGo makes money from simple search ads that do not use personal profiles, and it also offers a subscription with extra protection such as a VPN, AI tools, personal information removal, and identity theft restoration. DuckDuckGo is shown as a safe and private alternative to mainstream browsers and search engines.

b. At least two (2) positive reviews from independent sources; and

As I have been searching and reading through the internet, I found reviews that explained more about DuckDuckGo and shared their own thoughts and user experiences.

According to the Surfshark Blog article "*Is DuckDuckGo Safe?*", the writer explained that DuckDuckGo is safe because it does not track or save personal data. The article said that unlike Google, which builds a profile on users, DuckDuckGo avoids collecting such information, making it better for privacy. They also explained that DuckDuckGo makes money only from ads based on search keywords and not from selling user data. The review pointed out that DuckDuckGo is especially useful for people who want to avoid online tracking, reduce targeted ads, and keep their search history private.

Another positive review is from Avoid the Hack, in the article "*Review: DuckDuckGo Mobile Browser.*" The author tested the mobile browser and said it has strong privacy features such as blocking trackers, blocking cookies, and showing a privacy grade for each website you visit. The review explained that this makes it easy for users to understand which websites are safe and which are not. The writer also said the browser is simple, fast, and user-friendly while still giving protection. They highlighted that DuckDuckGo is a good choice for people who want private browsing without having to adjust complicated settings.

Links:

- https://surfshark.com/blog/is-duckduckgo-safe?srsltid=AfmBOor4Pf9BqiTN6gpYcpChR6DcBI7gikqBJLjxp3V_KqYrK2k2AUa1
- <https://avoidthehack.com/review-duckduckgo-mobile-browser>

c. At least two (2) negative reviews from independent sources.

As I have been searching and reading through the internet, I found reviews that explained more about DuckDuckGo and shared their own thoughts and user experiences.

According to the OneRep Blog article “*Is DuckDuckGo Safe? Everything You Need to Know in 2025*”, the writer explained that while DuckDuckGo protects privacy, it still has some weaknesses. The article said that DuckDuckGo relies on Bing’s search results, which can make them less accurate compared to Google. It also mentioned the issue in 2022 where DuckDuckGo allowed some Microsoft trackers, which made people question its strict privacy claims.

Another negative review comes from Reddit in the thread “*How is DuckDuckGo still so bad?*”. Users there shared that the search engine often gives poor quality results, sometimes ignoring quotation marks and not showing the most relevant pages. They also said it lacks advanced search tools, making it harder to use for deeper searches. These reviews show that while DuckDuckGo is strong in privacy, many people feel it still needs big improvements in search quality and reliability.

Links:

- https://www.reddit.com/r/duckduckgo/comments/rwf4di/how_is_duckduckgo_still_so_bad/
- <https://onerep.com/blog/is-duckduckgo-safe>

3. After reviewing what these sources say about the product or method, answer the following questions.

a. Explain in your own words how the tool works.

As I have learned from the sources I reviewed, DuckDuckGo is designed to keep searches private and stop other companies from tracking online activity. It does not build a personal profile or store search history, which makes it different from Google and Chrome. For example, if I search for “vacation places in the Philippines,” the result will not be saved or used to show me travel ads later on other websites. Instead, DuckDuckGo only shows ads related to the search at that moment, without connecting it to who I am. I also learned that it blocks hidden trackers, protects emails by removing tracking pixels, and gives a privacy grade for websites so users can see how safe a site is. These features show how DuckDuckGo works to give both privacy and safer browsing without collecting unnecessary personal data.

b. Describe at least one (1) strength and one (1) weakness of the tool.

As I have learned, one strength of DuckDuckGo is its strong privacy protection because it does not track searches, save history, or create personal profiles, which is helpful for people who want their activities to stay private. For example, if someone searches “cheap apartments in Tarlac City” or “personal medical advice for anxiety,” they do not have to worry about that information being saved or turning into targeted ads later. Another strength is its built-in tools like tracker blocking, cookie blocking, and smarter encryption, which make browsing safer and easier to understand even for ordinary users.

However, a weakness of DuckDuckGo is that its search results are not always as complete or updated compared to Google, since it relies on Bing's index. For example, when searching for "latest news about the government here in the Philippines," the results may not be as detailed. Another weakness is its limited advanced search features, like filtering by date or exact phrase searching, which can make it harder for people who need very specific or timely information.

c. How is this product supposed to decrease the chances your identity might be exposed if you were trying to interact anonymously online?

As I have explained in my previous answers, DuckDuckGo decreases the chances of your identity being exposed because it does not collect or save personal information when you search or browse. This means no profile is made about you, and your search history is not connected to your name or account. For example, if you search "compare prices of secondhand phones" or "find clinics near me," DuckDuckGo will not save these searches or use them to show you related ads later on other sites. It also blocks trackers and cookies that normally follow you from one website to another, which helps you stay anonymous. By stopping data collection from the start, it makes it much harder for your identity to be traced while you are online.

d. What are some circumstances where you might be identified anyway?

Based on my research, DuckDuckGo gives strong privacy but there are still times you might be identified. For example, when you click on a search result for an online shop like *Shopee* or *Lazada*, you leave DuckDuckGo, and the shop's website itself can still track you using cookies or by checking your device details, also called browser fingerprinting. Your internet service provider cannot see your exact searches, but it can still see your IP address and the websites you visit after leaving DuckDuckGo, such as if you go to *YouTube* or *Facebook*. On your own device, your browser may save history, cache, or autofill, and if your device has malware or someone else gets access to it, your activity may be exposed. You can also lose privacy if you give out personal details yourself, such as when signing up for DuckDuckGo's Email Protection and giving your email address. This shows that while DuckDuckGo improves privacy, it does not make you fully anonymous.

- 4. Place your answer on MS Word. Once done, save your work with the filename <Last name_First name_TP2> (ex. Magpili_Carlo_TP2) and call the attention of your instructor. Have it saved on his/her FTP account.***