

Initial Ethics Review Form

Application # _____

Project Title:

A User-Centric Examination of iOS App Privacy Report

Project Description

Project Aims

The widespread use of mobile apps highlights the need to understand their data practices. Transparency is crucial to ensure users are informed and can consent to data access. Apple introduced the App Privacy Report in iOS 15.2, offering users insights into app data access and sharing. While marketed as a significant privacy advancement, its real-world impact on user privacy and control remains unexplored.

This study aims to evaluate the real-world effectiveness of the App Privacy Report from the perspective of everyday iOS users. It seeks to understand how users perceive and interact with the feature, assess its impact on privacy awareness, and identify potential design gaps.

In this project, we will conduct Focus Group Discussions with iOS users to gather their perceptions and experiences with the App Privacy Report. Participants will discuss the feature's usability, effectiveness, and impact on their privacy control. The discussion will be analyzed to assess the feature's effectiveness, identify potential areas for improvement, and provide actionable insights for its enhancement.

Output: A scientific publication

Research Methods

We will conduct a structured focus group discussion centered on the iOS App Privacy Report. A prepared question guide will be used to direct the session, which will be moderated by a senior researcher with assistance from a PhD candidate. The discussion is expected to last 60–70 minutes and will be video- and audio-recorded and transcribed for subsequent qualitative analysis.

Participant Pool

Participants are recruited from [anonymous university]. Eligibility criteria require participants to be proficient in using mobile apps and to own an iOS device. The study will be advertised on campus through various channels, including social media and campus forums. Based on research suggesting that 10 participants provide a balance between diverse perspectives and manageable group dynamics, we plan to recruit 12 participants to account for potential no-shows. Participants will be contacted individually via SMS to schedule the meeting.

In all cases, the requests will be made under the following conditions:

- Participants will receive a compensation of 70 Yuan for their time.
- It will be made clear that participation is voluntary.

Data Management

All data collected during the study will be anonymized, with no personally identifiable information (e.g., names) being recorded. The data will be securely stored and analyzed locally by the research team only. No data will be shared with third parties.

Funding and External Contractors

N.A.

Project Location(s): [Anonymous Building/Office]

Proposed Start Date: 3 April 2024

Proposed Finish Date: 3 April 2024

Ethical Considerations

Please check the relevant box to answer **Yes** or **No** to each of the following questions. If answering **Yes** to any questions, please ensure further details are provided in the project description above.

1. **Has this project been reviewed and conditionally approved or rejected by another ethics committee?**
☐ Yes ☒ No
2. **Is the project being externally funded or provided with in-kind support by an external party?**
☐ Yes ☒ No

3. **Is the project designed to provide market research or a consultancy service fully paid for by a client?**
☐ Yes ☒ No
4. **Will there be any restrictions (or restrictive procedures) placed on the publication of results from this project as a result of the funding or support arrangements?**
☐ Yes ☒ No
5. **Will any part of the project be undertaken by or outsourced to a third party?**
☐ Yes ☒ No
6. **Are there any potential conflicts of interest for the research team or organisation(s) associated with the project?**
(e.g., arising from any involvement or role that researchers may have with other projects or external organisations, or an existing relationship between a member of the research team and the potential participants)
☐ Yes ☒ No
7. **Will consent for participation in this project be sought from all participants?**
☒ Yes ☐ No
8. **Will there be any incentive / payment (e.g., money, movie tickets, food vouchers) or reimbursement (e.g., travel expenses) given to participants?**
☒ Yes ☐ No
9. **Will the information being collected from and stored about participants be in an individually identifiable, potentially identifiable, or re-identifiable form?**
☐ Yes ☒ No
10. **Does the project involve limited disclosure to participants or active concealment?**
☐ Yes ☒ No
11. **Are there any risks (e.g., social, psychological, financial, physical, legal) to participants, the research team or others arising from their involvement in the research which cannot be mitigated / negated through project design?**
☐ Yes ☒ No
12. **Is it likely that the project will involve the disclosure of unlawful conduct, or concealment of a crime, by individuals or definable groups?**
☐ Yes ☒ No
13. **Will this research project involve access to, use, collection or acquisition of culturally sensitive materials or artefacts?**
☐ Yes ☒ No
14. **Will the information to be collected about participants during the project come from any of the following sources?**
☐ Yes ☒ No

If **Yes**, please specify:

- ☐ Another person about the research participant
- ☐ An agency, authority, or organisation other than [Anonymous Institution]
- ☐ A data source collected previously by [Anonymous Institution] for a purpose other than this research project

15. Will the project involve the collection, handling and/or storage of personal information?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Additional Notes

- If any questions are answered **Yes**, please provide detailed explanations in the **Project Description** section or as an attachment.
 - Ensure that all ethical considerations are addressed in the research design and methodology.
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Certification

Principal Researcher / Project Leader

Name: [Name]

Position: [Position]

Business Unit: [Business Unit]

Research Group: [Research Group]

Location: [Location]

Phone: [Phone]

Email: [Email]

Certification:

As Principal Researcher / Project Leader for this research project, I certify that:

- The information provided in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge.
- I will notify the ethics committee of any ethically relevant variations to the project.
- I will immediately report any adverse events or harm to participants.
- Data will be managed and stored in accordance with [Anonymous Institution]'s policies and relevant legislation.

Signed: [Electronic Signature]

Name: [Name]

Date: [Date]