#### **Introduction**

This reflection report explores the reasoning behind the selection of specific metrics for user tracking, shares insights gained from a test run, and discusses the potential benefits and harms of user tracking. Additionally, the implications of collecting user data and using third-party tracking tools are examined.

#### **Reasoning for Metric Selection**

For my website, I chose to track two specific metrics: time on page and presses on technology filters. The decision to track time on page was driven by the need to understand which sections of the website attract the most user interest. By identifying the most engaging content, I can focus on improving this data and potentially adding extra features to enhance user experience. Tracking the preferred filters helps to determine which types of surveillance are of the most concern to users. This information can guide the development of content and tools that address these specific concerns.

#### **Insights from the Test Run**

The test run provided several key insights. The most viewed page was the map page, indicating a high level of user interest in visualising surveillance data geographically. Additionally, the most frequently viewed filters were internet monitoring and video surveillance. This suggests that users are particularly concerned about these forms of tracking. These insights highlighted the need to improve the map's functionality and usability, as well as to provide more detailed information on internet and video surveillance. This focus can help address user concerns and enhance the overall value of the website.

#### **Potential Benefits and Harms of User Tracking**

User tracking offers significant potential benefits. It can greatly aid in product improvement by revealing what aspects of the site users are most drawn to, thereby informing decisions on where to allocate resources for development. For example, understanding that users are more concerned with video and internet tracking can prompt the creation of more comprehensive resources or tools in these areas. Furthermore, user tracking data can sometimes lead to the creation of useful datasets for further research, contributing to broader knowledge in the field of digital privacy and surveillance.

However, user tracking also comes with potential harms. Collecting too much data, especially personal information, can violate user privacy. It is crucial to strike a balance between gathering useful insights and respecting user privacy. Transparency and user consent are essential to maintaining trust and ethical standards.

#### **Implications of Collecting User Data**

In my position, I collect user data using session IDs to differentiate between sessions. This method does not involve storing or collecting personal information externally, which minimises the risk of misuse. However, I recognize the need to obtain explicit user consent, which is a practice that should be implemented to ensure ethical data collection. Currently, the data is stored on a local database that cannot be accessed externally, which enhances its security. Ensuring that the data collected is not harmful or invasive is a priority, but the lack of user consent remains an area for improvement.

#### **Using Off-the-Shelf Tools from a Third-Party**

I chose not to use any third-party tools for tracking, opting instead to write all the tracking scripts myself. This decision was influenced by concerns about third-party data aggregation and commercialization. Many third-party tools aggregate data across different websites and sell it for commercial purposes, which is undesirable from a privacy perspective. By developing custom tracking scripts, I maintain control over the data collected and ensure it is used solely for the intended purpose of improving the website.

#### **Conclusion**

The use of user tracking on my website has provided valuable insights that can drive improvements and better meet user needs. However, it is essential to balance the benefits of user tracking with the need to protect user privacy. Implementing user consent and maintaining transparency are crucial steps in this process. Additionally, the decision to avoid third-party tracking tools helps safeguard user data from commercial exploitation.