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Tracking Transparency Privacy Policy

This privacy policy relates to the Tracking Transparency browser extension. The project started as a study conducted by researchers at the University of Maryland and the University of Chicago. For more information on the study, please see the [OSF repository](#).

This extension's aim is to provide transparency to users about the ways they are tracked online.



In this policy, “the researchers,” “our,” “we,” or similar terms refer to any and all researchers or assistants otherwise involved in this project. We are committed to protecting the privacy of all users of our extension. We have established this privacy policy to help explain what information the extension collects and how this information will be used.

1. Information Gathered

As you browse the web, the extension will gather information. This information will be presented to you in order to provide a “tracker's perspective” of you and your browsing habits. Information gathered by the extension may include:

1.1 Overview

- Data about the web pages you visit, including:
 - The page's title and URL
 - Date and time information about pages visited
 - The trackers present on the page
 - A guess about what the page is about (inferred topic)
 - Google adsSettings information over time [AdsSettings](#)
 - Modified (i.e., readable, or stop-words removed) webpage content if that page falls into a particular inferred topic
 - Information about advertisements served, included what the ad is about (i.e., the inferred topic) and where the ad links to (i.e., the final destination click-through)
- Analytics regarding interaction with the extension (collected in part by Chrome)
- Whether you have other ad or tracker blocker extensions installed

1.2 Sharing Data with Researchers

The extension *does not share any data with the researchers.*

2. Purposes in Data Collection

Web history data: In order to help you visualize your web browsing, the extension keeps a local database with the pages that you visit while the extension is installed and enabled. Page titles and URLs are stored on the local copy of the extension (i.e., your computer).

Tracker data: This extension gathers information about the trackers that you may have interacted with online. This information is stored locally, and is also used to help you visualize what happens when you browse online.

Inferred topics: When you browse web pages, our extension will make inferences about the topics of visited web pages and store this information locally, in order to improve the visualizations shown in the extension.

Google adsSettings Data: As you browse the web, our extension will periodically check the Google AdsSettings webpage for new information.

This information is collected to improve the visualizations you see in the extension, information which is stored locally.

Advertising Data: The extension captures information about advertisements you've been served while browsing the web. This includes the inferred interest of the advertisement, which is gathered by fetching the URL of the advertisement (i.e., the final destination of the click-through link) and guessing the topic of the resulting webpage. This information is collected in order to improve visualizations found in the extension.

3. Contact

If you have any questions about our privacy and data protection practices, you can reach us at:

Tracking Transparency

Email: trackingtransparency@gmail.com

4. Changes Made

This privacy policy may change periodically. However, any revised privacy policy will be consistent with the purposes of this research project. If we make any substantive changes to our policies, we will post notice of changes on this page.

Updated October 28, 2018 to clarify affiliations of researchers.

Updated November 5, 2018 to update institutions involved.

Updated January 19, 2022 regarding data collection processes.

Updated July 6, 2022 to add examples of data collection.

Updated August 2, 2023 to reflect accurate data collection.

Updated March 19, 2024 to accurately describe the extension's operation without telemetry (removed for public release).