Web Application: Ethics and Social Issues

Relating our anime website, one particular ethical issue that may arise is the question of “what happens to user data?” If someone decides to visit our website in hopes of finding the next big juicy anime drama to watch, should the thought of Ethan Schofield hoarding the websites data and judging everyone’s anime choices keep them up at night? Quite possibly, since the website in no way complies with the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). There are many provisions in this law but two specifically are the “right to object” to information being collected and the “right to access” the data being used or collected. These rights assured to the user by the GDPR give them a piece of mind knowing that they ultimately have a “right to be forgotten”, something else assured by the GDPR. This right simply means that at any time the user of the anime website could request that any archives of their anime searches be purged so that no record remains. While this is a EU law, since people in Europe like anime too, the law governs that US websites offering services to EU citizens must comply with the law as well.

However, even if our website does not comply with the GDPR, there are certain data protection measures that could be implemented to protect the data of website users. One such mechanism is encryption and pseudonymization, which simply means that personal data is processed in such a way that it is no longer attributable to the user. With encryption, data is protected (rendered unreadable) through various cryptographic methods. Another method of data protection is Identity and Access Management (IDAM). This is a control method which limits access of stored personal data only to authorized individuals whose job it is to deal with this data. One final protection is Data Loss Prevention (DLP), DLP tools add a layer of protection by preventing the transmission of personal data outside the network. Of these listed data protection mechanisms, the only one not required by the GDPR is pseudonymization. If these protections were to ever be implemented, you could rest assured that no one else would have access to your anime search history, other than Ethan.

Sources:

* <https://www.cybergrx.com/resources/research-and-insights/blog/6-security-controls-need-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr>
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Data_Protection_Regulation#Rights_of_the_data_subject>