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App Review: GSuite for Education

G Suite for Education is arguably one of the most widely used digital tools in America. It is a Google Product that includes a number of digital applications including GMail, Google Meet, Google Docs, Google Slides, and Google Classroom.

Quick & Dirty Guide to G Suite Privacy Policy and User Agreement

The [G Suite for Education Agreement](#) and [G Suite for Education Privacy Policy](#) are wordy and technical but are surprisingly easy to follow. Google takes great pains to create YouTube videos explaining privacy options and features. I list the most relevant points regarding students below.

➢ Google Collects the following Data from students:
   ✱ device information, such as the hardware model, operating system version, unique device identifiers, and mobile network information including phone number of the user;
   ✱ log information, including details of how a user used our service, device event information, and the user's Internet protocol (IP) address;
   ✱ location information, as determined by various technologies including IP address, GPS, and other sensors;
   ✱ unique application numbers, such as application version number; and
   ✱ **cookies or similar technologies** which are used to collect and store information about a browser or device, such as preferred language and other settings

➢ As per the education agreement:
   ✱ Your student's data will **NOT** be used for advertising purposes.

★ Google is **not** using your student's data to create a profile of them.

★ G Suite is FERPA compliant. Google will be considered a "School Official" and will comply with FERPA to ensure your student's data is secured.

➤ Information users share:

★ A school may allow students to access Google services such as Google Docs and Sites, which include features where users can share information with others or publicly. When users share information publicly, it may be indexable by search engines, including Google.

Is it safe?

As a parent of a high-schooler and as a teacher, I feel that G Suite is relatively safe. Google has agreed not to monetize your student's data and adheres to FERPA. Like all online platforms, there are some risks of data being exposed publicly. Your student must take pains to make sure they choose a secure password and to beware of phishing attempts. They must also understand how to use the sharing settings on their G Suite documents to secure their digital artifacts on the cloud. The G Suite domain administrators must be careful as well. They must ensure that any permitted add-ons that teachers and students install comply with FERPA and protect student privacy. There is no such thing as perfect security, especially when data is stored in the cloud, but Google has assured users, that they will only be using collected data to ensure their products are functioning.

What's in it for Google?

Google is indeed a for-profit company. Google is not making money from G Suite for Education. However, its ubiquitous use has driven the sales of Google Chromebooks and increased the use of the Chrome Browser. Google is most certainly benefitting from the current pandemic. According to [one article](#) Chromebooks have sold 3x the amount of traditional laptops from March - June, 2020. I'd venture to say that if students

become comfortable using Google products, they are more likely to use the monetized versions after their schooling ends, thus grabbing consumers early.