

Sept. 11, 2020

Dear students and parents,

I will be using Pear Deck this year. I want to tell you about the privacy situation with this product. Feel free to contact me with any questions, but the short version is that you don't need to worry so long as you don't create PearDecks of your own.

Pear Deck which is used by teachers to provide presentation materials that students can interact with, for instance, with polls.

PearDeck collects the email address, name, images from the teacher's account when it connects to the service. It claims it will not collect personally identifiable information from users identified as students, but does not explain how it categorizes users. There may also be information outside those specific categories that, in aggregate, may allow someone to figure out with high probability who the user is.

For instance, Pear Deck collects IP addresses, type of mobile device used (model number, serial number?), OS, browser, zip codes or cities, technical info about device (hardware, software, peripherals, etc), date and time stamps of transactions, metadata of user content (what are they?).

According to Pear Deck, they don't profit from user data. They make their money from subscriptions paid for by individuals, schools and districts for premium features. They do not use advertising or in-app promotions.

Pear Deck uses industry standard encryption practices, and uses aggregated, anonymized, and de-identified data to improve its products.

Pear Deck has signed the Pledge to Safeguard Student Privacy, and comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). I don't know the specifics these laws and agreements, or their monitoring or enforcement.

Pear Deck does not claim ownership over materials created by its users. The company does not say how long it is keeping the data. I think that means forever.

I also reviewed the Terms of Service. It is fairly straightforward. You may want to read it if you have any questions or concerns.

In summary, for the ways I intend to use this service, no real data will be provided by students, and the company seems to not need to sell its data. I would be comfortable if I had children and they use Pear Decks that another teacher creates that are like mine. I do not intend to track students' responses to questions I pose on my Pear Decks, so a student could opt out. However, doing so will likely provide no real benefits while impeding their integration in the class and their learning.

I base all this information on Pear Deck's website: <https://www.peardeck.com/privacy> and <https://www.peardeck.com/privacy-policy>, and <https://github.com/peardeck/policies/blob/master/terms-of-service.md>

Best,

Mr. Lee