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Data and Privacy

Lab 4

Objective:

Understanding what entails data and privacy when it comes to consumer data.

Procedure:

1. Collecting data. Download or view data from chosen sources. Note the steps taken to retrieve data.

Of the data you attempted to retrieve, which services made accessing your data easiest?

Download or view the data for your selected accounts. What format was your data in? If you were unable to download your data, why might it only be available online?

Make note of how your data is organized. Is it easy to navigate? Are there multiple file types involved? If so, what kinds?

1. Interpretation. Figure out what kinds of data are stored and write up any surprises or interesting notices.

Observe locational data or photos/videos if your data dump includes any. How much information is and itsd here (especially if it’s locational data)? Why might a service want to store this kind of data?

Take some time to look through any other information that interests you in your data dump. Do you remember agreeing to allow for the collection of this data? If so, does this data dump look like what you agreed to have collected?

1. Privacy Agreements. Review the data privacy sections for the services you selected. Observe the design of these sites. Is your attention drawn to any specific topics or graphics? Are they easy to navigate? Can you find answers to your privacy questions?   
   What might these services be attempting to make you feel on these sites?

You may have heard of data scandals or breaches involved with some of the services you downloaded data from. Having reviewed your downloaded data and its associated privacy policies, do you feel more or less confident in these services’ respect for your data? Why?

Research/Results:

1. Google: copied link (1). Following another link to get data and select the type of data wanted to download (2). Customize the format and download the data selected.

Facebook: copied link (1), select the account icon and select settings & privacy, then settings (2), the in the left column, click privacy, then Facebook information (3). Go to Download profile information, click view (4). Add and remove chosen categories and select options to choose format download and date range for info (5). Click request download to confirm the request (6).

Google data results: Easiest to download and easy to read. Despite there being 5 gigabytes of data, the data is easy to read. They kept track of each time I logged into google and the recovery account info as well. They are thorough in documentation so much of my activity is recorded.

Facebook/Instagram data results: I selected only a few pieces of data and most of those pieces have no data. They kept track of the Facebook groups I’m following and the date and time I joined. Despite the extra steps, Facebook was the easiest to read. The format was in HTML files that are organized by folders. With the folder system, data was easy to find. Instagram collects far more data than Facebook, which doesn’t surprise me too much.

1. The targeted ads for Instagram were dink of funny. Maybe a third of them reflect my interest and the other two-thirds reflect the interests of friends. I do not post but I did put in my location in general, not active location logging for when I access my account. Since I’m minimalistic, it is interesting to see the collected data. My bio for Instagram also logs changes. For Google, my email log won’t open for whatever reason but it’s a little reassuring. Google Drive information was included with lots of media, from word docs to images and videos.
2. Google is upfront with what they collect and why they collect it. Navigating the privacy agreement is simple and it answers most of the questions and superstitions that many have. They made it user-friendly. I’m confident enough that my data is respected and that they take precautions when managing it. No service is perfect, but their privacy and terms make it up front.

Instagram is less intuitive. They have sub-tabs to expand and each one goes more in-depth into what they collect and why they collect it. Instead of focusing on privacy and management, Instagram focuses on user experience and personalization. Many third parties are also on the platform and data is strictly shared. With a third party, there are some new exposures to threats that they may not consider. Instagram is an extension of Facebook, which makes them similar in that aspect. With shared info between the two platforms, it is safe to say they also connect their data in similar fashions and have similar privacy agreements.

Conclusion: All services that help connect you to other people will have data and privacy policies. Data collection and data management will always be integrated with online profiles. There is always a risk of losing credentials and data stolen but companies that run these services secure our data as well as they can. Even with good security, it is ideal to have a minimized presence in the online world.

Appendix:

<https://support.google.com/accounts/answer/3024190?hl=en>

<https://www.facebook.com/help/212802592074644?rdrhc>

<https://about.instagram.com/blog/announcements/instagram-community-data-policy/>

<https://policies.google.com/privacy>

<https://www.facebook.com/privacy/policy>

<https://privacycenter.instagram.com/policy/>