

Term project proposal

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The subject

Privacy and surveillance problem has become more and more important in modern society. On the one hand, we store our personal information on the internet for convenience. On the other hand, people might be prosecuted for this information. Furthermore, government might request certain company to disclose user data. In this project, by building a web-based data visualization, we hope to find the trending of user data requirement, both from the perspective of companies and countries (i.e. In past 5 years, which company is more likely to disclose data to government? Which company is more likely to send user data requests?). Additionally, following example questions/thoughts might be discussed in the report:

- Is it ethical for the company to disclose data to government?
- The ownership issue of the data;
- Does company's' attitude shifted when confronting different governments?
- Among cases that company is required to handle user data, is there a smart way for the company to be responsible to both the government and its customers? Is this smart the “new ethics”?

The data source

We chose list of # of requests (of data) from different countries (detailed or not) from couple of major tech companies that share these transparency report data:

[Google](#)

[Microsoft](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Apple](#)

Each of them are separated/aggregated datasets that these companies sort out periodically (annual reports and detailed records). These requests include not limit to requests of users' information, inquiries of content removal, product traffics, etc.

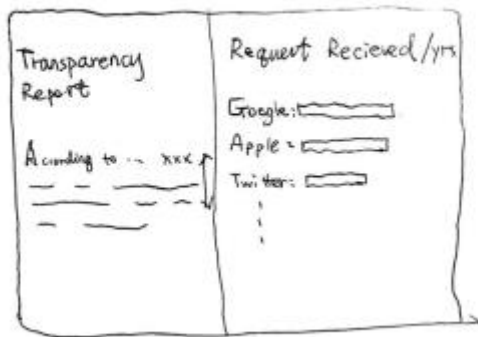
Visual ideation

Since our project is a web page, we want to leverage the scrollable nature of the page and transform data visualizations along with scrolling down the storyline. Below in the Appendix is a sketch of our initial thoughts on frames of this page. As “scrolling down”, the data on the right transform in a way that it visualizes the content we are stating on the left. Histograms, dots, curves and any shapes that come in between the transformations of them are used for data.

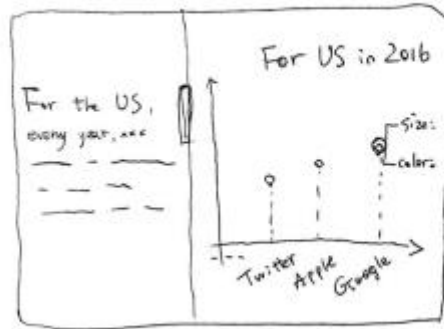
For frame 1, we open the storyline and display the overall numbers of such request (of information from governments) of several companies; On frame 2, we zoom in to examine the specific request flow from the US government (in a year) to these companies and more importantly, their reactions. On frame 3, as scrolling, we aggregate the data of those companies in a range of years, trying to show the trend of certain attitudes transformation. Frame 4 is undecided and reserved for either merging data of other kinds of request or showing more countries.

Appendix

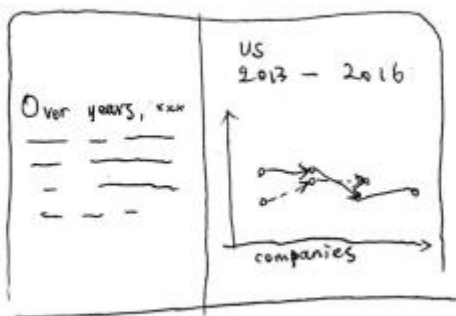
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