

# Unit – Ethics in CS

## Essential Questions:

How should ethics play a role in our decisions when using computers?

What is an individual's responsibility to act ethically?

What is the government's responsibility to define ethical behavior?

## Lesson #7 – Personal Data Privacy

**Objectives -** SWBAT analyze the privacy policies of two content-sharing sites (Instagram and TikTok).

**Supporting EQ:** How public is what you post online?

### Standards (Rhode Island Computer Science Standards)

3-RC-CU-1 Evaluate the ways computing impacts personal, ethical, social, economic, and cultural practices.

3-RC-SLE-2 Evaluate the social and economic implications of privacy and free speech in the context of safety, law, or ethics.

### Overview

**Do Now:** Would you be comfortable with all of the things you posted on social media being public information?

**Activity:** Students will analyze the common sense media report on the privacy of two popular social media apps: TikTok and Instagram. Before they begin, they will write down two things they expect to see in the privacy policies. After/during reading, they will write down things that surprised them and identify if their predictions were true. They will then compare and contrast the two privacy policies and write a primer for new users that briefly summarizes what they can expect from using the service.

**(Follow-up lesson)** This can be followed by a debate about whether or not it should be okay for these sites to share photos and information with government agencies.

### Notes

After discussing if students would be comfortable with their social media photos being made public, they will be asked if they think that's a risk of happening and hypothesize who has access to their photos. Before reading the privacy policy summaries for each app, students should make two predictions about what they expect to find in there. After reading through the policies, they will reflect on those predictions and also identify two or three things that surprised them about the policies. They will then pair up to compare and contrast the two policies and summarize for new users what they can do to keep their photos private.

This summary will be in the form of an interactive program that asks users what they are doing to protect their data and assigns them a privacy score based on that information. This program can be in any language, but will have to prompt the user with yes or no questions and then calculate an overall score for the user's privacy. It is up to the students how to calculate this score and what questions to ask.

**Follow-up lesson:** This will be followed up by a debate about the practice of handing over data to government agencies that request it. A follow-up lesson can involve reading this article (<https://diginomica.com/government-should-force-social-media-companies-hand-over-data-research>) and deciding if the recommendations in it should be put into effect.

### Handouts

The two privacy policies – linked below should be available to students beforehand.

#### In-Person Learning Alternative:

Print-outs of the article can be provided to students.

### Resources

<https://privacy.commonsense.org/privacy-report/instagram>

<https://privacy.commonsense.org/evaluation/TikTok---Real-Short-Videos>

### Assignment/Assessments

Student pairs will submit a program that takes user input and then assigns a score to the user based on how much of

their privacy they are protecting. This would be sort of a text-based adventure game.