

Paper Code



Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
Trinity College Dublin

Ollscoil Átha Cliath | The University of Dublin

Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science

School of Computer Science & Statistics

BLAH for electives

What is the Internet Doing to Me?

TEU00311

XX August 2022

SOMEPLACE

09.30 – 11.30

Dr. Stephen Farrell

Instructions to Candidates:

Attempt **two** questions. All questions carry equal marks (50 each).

You may not start this examination until you are instructed to do so by the invigilator.

Materials Permitted for this examination:

N/A

Question 1

GDPR rights - such as the right to make data subject access requests and the right to be forgotten – are intended to be a practical means of protecting data protection and privacy rights online.

On the basis of the module lecture content and your experience with submitting a GDPR request, write an essay about whether and to what extent you agree or disagree with the above, (and why), with a focus on the ***practicality*** of the protections afforded by the current operation of GDPR.

[50]

Question 2

Devices such as smartphones or laptops, (including their operating systems and installed applications), can expose users to being tracked or to be the subject of targeted advertising. For a real device you use:

(a) Describe the device itself, and its installed applications, and how familiar you are with the underlying technologies involved with the device and its interactions with the Internet.

[15]

(b) Describe in as much detail as you can the ways in which that device, and your usage patterns for that device, expose you to the potential for being tracked or the subject of targeted advertising.

[25]

(c) What actions could you take in order to reduce the potential tracking involved in your use of the chosen device? For each action identified, say if you would consider taking that action or not, and why.

[10]

Question 3

Most web sites make use of cookies both for reasonable application purposes but also for tracking users. Similarly, most web sites may have links to partners for advertising or analytics that result in users being tracked. Many web sites make use of so-called “dark patterns” in order to encourage users to reveal more about themselves to the site operator and their partners, or to make it difficult for users to unsubscribe or opt-out of services. Some web sites also apply artificial intelligence (AI) techniques in order to e.g. attempt to display what is considered “more relevant” content to users.

In answering below, the more concrete, specific and technically detailed your description the better, e.g. describing specific web sites you use is better than providing an abstract description.

(a) Describe three ways in which web sites make use of tracking technologies and what you consider the effects those have on you as an individual user and on the population of users generally.

[10]

(b) Describe how a web site might employ the kind of “dark pattern” mentioned above. Describe two ways in which industry self-regulation or government regulation might attempt to mitigate such bad practices and in each case say whether or not (and why) you consider such regulatory steps might or might not be effective?

[15]

(c) Describe how a web site might employ the kind of AI technique mentioned above. What harms can result from the use of such technologies and when would you consider use of such technology ethically sound or not?

[15]

(d) What actions can a user take to avoid all these kinds of web technologies? In each case, say if you have or would or would not take that action and justify your answer.

[10]