



Privacy Requires Work

Review Questions

Answer Key

1. Who is responsible for protecting your online privacy? Explain your answer.

Target/ideal answer: I am responsible for my own privacy!

Explanations should reflect an understanding that everyone/every company is acting in their own interest, and that even if others officially have some obligation to protect the student's privacy, they won't necessarily do so.

2. What is the purpose of a privacy policy for a website, app, or service?

Possible answers include:

Privacy policies inform users about what companies can do with their data.

Privacy policies legally protect companies from being sued by users over data sharing.

3. Name two limitations of privacy policies.

Possible answers might include:

Privacy policies can change without you knowing.

Privacy policies are so long/so boring/written in such unreadable legalese that users rarely read them.

Privacy policies are often vague.

Privacy policies are written by people whose goal is to legally protect the company (not you!)

There are few laws governing how privacy policies can present themselves.

The people who write the privacy policies may not communicate with the engineers who develop the products.

4. Name two limitations of the laws protecting privacy in the U.S.

Possible answers might include:

Laws vary by location.

Laws regarding the Internet may create uncertainty about jurisdiction.

Laws may only be specific to particular limited areas of data collection.

Laws change over time, so are difficult to keep track of.



There's often a lack of resources for monitoring and enforcement.

There's a tendency to only enforce the laws when complaints are filed.

Lawmakers often lack knowledge about technical possibilities.

General users often don't know specifics about privacy laws and/or the issues around privacy protection (so may assume they're protected more than they are).

Note: Extensive knowledge about specific laws, etc. should not be required; any reasonable answers that make sense should be given full credit.

5. Give at least one reason why it's important to periodically check privacy settings.

Possible examples might include:

The options available for privacy settings can change.

The default settings can change (so if you had whatever was default before, you may have whatever is default now, even if it's different).

Your desires may change over time. (Not covered here, but in other modules.)

6. Give examples of two actions you can take to affect what others do to protect your privacy. Who would each action target and why would it affect what they do?

Possible examples might include:

Choosing products and services whose privacy policies and practices match your preferences; affects companies' bottom line.

Contacting legislators and policymakers to express your views about how online privacy should be regulated; informs them about what citizens (not companies) want.

Contacting businesses and organizations to complain if your privacy expectations are violated; lets the companies or organizations know their reputations are threatened.

Giving companies negative reviews in online ratings services if your privacy expectations are violated; affects companies' reputations and therefore their bottom line.

Talking with friends and family about your (and their) privacy preferences; informs them about what you want and encourages them to think about it when they're posting about you (and vice versa).

