

Views of Privacy: Business Drivers, Strategies and Directions

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This research examined privacy from an organizational perspective, asking how an organization might use technology to enable privacy protection of the data it holds. The goal of this privacy research project was to create an understanding of the business drivers, strategies, and anticipated future privacy needs of organizations that collect and use personal information (PI). A further goal of this research was to inform the future direction of privacy enabling products and services. To accomplish this goal, the research team completed an email questionnaire with 51 representatives of business and government organizations concerned with privacy issues in North America, Europe, and Asia (23 participants from Industry and 28 participants from Government). The quantitative results identified participants' top privacy concerns regarding their organizations and the most desired privacy functionality to address these top concerns. The analysis of the qualitative data gathered from follow-on, in-depth interviews with 13 representatives provided a rich picture of business drivers related to privacy, and privacy's relation to security, business processes, personalization, customer relationship management, and trust.

This research provided insight about the developing perspectives, concerns, and needs of organizations. The email survey data highlighted potential emerging trends in the views of organizational representatives. It is understandable that the top privacy concern of Industry, which must focus on profits and return to shareholders, is economic harm to their brands due to privacy breaches regarding PI. In contrast, the top concern for Government is keeping external users (e.g., hackers) from violating the privacy of others' data. Industry and Government share concerns about the potential for misuse of PI by internal employees and protection of PI in legacy applications. Otherwise, the Industry and Government segments generally share similar privacy concerns. The results show strong consensus about the type of privacy functionality needed to address the top concerns. Industry and Government respondents want easy-to-use privacy authoring, implementation and auditing tools that work as integrated solutions in heterogeneous configurations with Web and legacy data. These tools need to enable the privacy policy to be attached to the data so that no matter how or where the PI is moved within the organization, the data remain protected and out of view of staff with no need to know.

The in-depth interviews provide a deeper understanding of the business drivers, strategies and directions regarding privacy for these organizations. Recent research [1] documents the importance of ensuring customers of the privacy of their data when they are deciding to opt-in to personalization programs in e-commerce. The interviewees in the current research study validated this finding, and went further to discuss the relationships they see between privacy and their personalization programs, as well as their customers' trust of their brands. Additionally, they view a connection between privacy and their customer relationship management programs and privacy and internal operations and management, including education of employees concerning privacy and streamlining of business processes. These organizations are actively developing privacy strategies and many are identifying unanticipated financial benefits in implementing privacy solutions.

Most privacy-related research concerns end-user views and the need for privacy protection in the domain of e-commerce. This research study, for the first time, provides insights from the perspective of organizational concerns and needs. The research suggests that HCI researchers and practitioners may benefit from considering privacy issues from multiple viewpoints including the end-user (or data subject) of an organization's products and services as well as the employees and administrators (both data users and subjects) of the larger organization. Privacy issues at this time touch many applications in many different domains. When designing business applications that will use PI, it is important to understand how the application will integrate into the organization's privacy practices and business processes. The respondents in this study were adamant that privacy solutions should be easy to use. In this context, easy to use means that the solution must include simplifying the data classification process, tying that process to the flow of PI through the organization, providing the implications of privacy policies to all parties, and integrating across all types of data stores in organizations' heterogeneous configurations. The HCI field must step up to the challenge of understanding how privacy relates to the domain in which they are working and creating interfaces and interaction methods that reduce the complexity in defining, implementing, and managing privacy policies for the benefit of all parties.

References

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