



# DATA PRIVACY, HIGHER EDUCATION

Why Should We Care?

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# AGENDA

## Higher Education Institutions (University, College, other post secondary):

- Need to teach data privacy, ethics, and digital literacy courses
- Must communicate how and why they collect, use and share students' personal information
- Are obligated to document importance of understanding students' attitudes, expectations and behaviors regarding data privacy

## DIGITAL NATIVES

- 2018 Pew Research Center survey for students aged 18 to 24 regarding use of social media:
  - 94% YouTube
  - 80% Facebook
  - 78% Snapchat
  - 71% Instagram
  - 45% Twitter

# HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS PRIVACY

## Collection, Use and Potential Breaches:

- Institutions collect and use students' data to improve teaching, learning, and advising
- However, students do not understand how institutions use their collected personal data
- Students wary of privacy violations including:
  - facial recognition, network monitoring, online learning, and predictive analytics systems

## PRIVACY EXPECTATIONS

- Students expect boundaries between information collected about their **personal** versus **academic** lives
- Expectation that Institutions use student data for **educational** purposes only
- Students opposed to data collection to **analyze students' activities**:
  - IDs, smart cards, smartphones
  - Geolocation
  - Social media
- Students unaware of **which** information Institutions collected **and** **purposes for collection**



## COVID & PRIVACY

- Students **concerned about increased monitoring** of social media activities to ensure strict adherence to COVID-19 safety protocols
- **Students expect institutions to:**
  - Respect their privacy
  - Commit to ethical, equitable data privacy practices
- Students **require a clear relationship** between the information their **institutions collect** and its (data) **use for educational purpose**



## COVID & PRIVACY

- If such information is collected, the university will have to consider a range of issues:
- Will screening information be collected daily? Weekly?
- What modes of collection will be used? Paper forms, online tools?
- Consider the use, storage, and retention of such data. Should aggregate data be available to public health officials, or researchers?

# BIOMETRICS

- Students opposed to biometric information
- In 2020 UCLA and about 50 other schools voted to ban facial recognition
- ***“Facial recognition does not improve security and may actually make it worse” Anonymous***







## PRIVACY PROTECTION

- Students have greater confidence that Institutions (including Government) will protect privacy securely compared to technology companies
- 2021 survey by Generation Lab (a polling and research firm studying young people and the trends that shape their world)
  - 51% believe government should regulate major technology companies
  - 77% believe social media companies have too much power (e.g. Google, Facebook, Amazon and Apple)
- Belief that Governments exist to serve **people's interests**, versus companies' primary obligation to **shareholders' interests**

# LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS)





## LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS)

- Students **concerned** active learning not reflected when Institutions spend time tracking:
  - LMS (**Learning Management Systems**) and
  - Library books borrowed and time spent on Blackboard
- Students **want proof**:
  - Institutions' collection and use of their personal information is justified to improve educational experiences; and
  - Collected personal information serves this intended purpose



## LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS)

- Concern that Institutions use predictive analytics data to determine future possibilities
- Student **objections**:
  - LMS that used predictive data to recommend course pathways
  - Systems used incomplete or inaccurate data to discourage students from courses or majors that interested them
  - Career/educational support was not received from informed, trustworthy faculty instead of automated AI only



## EQUITY AND BIAS

- Students expressed concern over equity and bias:
  - Fear that teachers who can see grades may give preference to students receiving higher grades and not others who are struggling
  - ***“Potential to be treated differently based on certain parties gaining access to my personal information.” Anonymous***





## FIND – AND READ! THE STUDENT DATA PRIVACY POLICY

According to Inside Higher Ed - Student Voice:

- 40%** Students think it's **very important** that Institutions have a data privacy policy
- 12%** Students **found and read** their Institutions data privacy policy
- 51%** Students **think** their Institutions have a data privacy policy, or don't **know** if there is a existing policy

## CONSIDER AVAILABLE OPT-OUT OPTIONS

- 39%** Students say they personally **opt out** of allowing cookies or other web data to be tracked when possible
- 69%** Students **aren't sure** whether they can set permissions for the data their college collects about them (22% **believe** they can)

***“I am really annoyed with how my school shares my enrollment information and email with student loan companies who then harass me to take out their loans.”***

***Anonymous***

# ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS TO PERSONAL DATA

Sampling of questions from an **Educause Review** article:

- **55%** Students think it's somewhat (29%) or very (26%) **unacceptable** for an Institution to share students' personal information **with third parties**
- **58%** Students think it's somewhat (27%) or very (31%) **unacceptable** for an Institution to **track websites** that students visit while on campus Wi-Fi
- **31%** Students think it's somewhat (17%) or very (14%) **unacceptable** for an Institution to **use monitoring or proctoring technology** during exams
  - *Are there aspects of your identity or life that you feel would put you in a place of special vulnerability if certain data were known about you or used against you?*





## DISCUSS DATA IN COURSES AND ACROSS CAMPUS

Students who are at least somewhat concerned about the way:

- **big technology** companies handle their data (48%)
- **apps on their smartphones** handle their data (58%)

*“I am worried they will profile me, accurately or not, and make assumptions about me politically, religiously, etc. and be less likely to give me scholarships and grants because of it.”*

*Anonymous*



## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Institutions **must educate students about privacy:**
  - **Teach**  
data privacy, ethics, and digital literacy courses to encourage students to think critically about data privacy
  - **Prepare**  
students to fully comprehend implications of collection, use and sharing personal information without prior knowledge and consent
  - **Develop**  
curricula that includes instruction on data privacy and ethics to keep pace with tech developments and cultivate data-literate citizens

## 2. Higher Education Institutions (and technology companies) must follow basic Privacy Principles:

- **Communicate:**  
How and why they collect, use and share students' personal information
- **Build Credibility & Trust:**  
Foster trust and cooperation
- **Increase Awareness:**  
Improve awareness of data collection, use and disclosure practices
- **Full Transparency:**  
Disclose that institutions use their information for educational purposes only

## RECOMMENDATIONS



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3. To **understand student needs**, researchers should conduct more studies on specific privacy topics, such as:
  - **Privacy Concerns / Beliefs:**  
How do students' privacy attitudes differ based on race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, special needs, citizenship status, gender, etc.
  - **AI System Bias:**  
Relying on algorithms (criticized for racial and gender bias) that disproportionately discriminate against, and unintentionally excludes, students of color and other marginalized student groups



## RECOMMENDATIONS

4. Develop **Privacy Policies, Procedures and Practices** about:
  - **Communication:**  
Effectively communicating good privacy policies and practices to students can help eliminate general mistrust and apprehension about privacy protection
  - **Collection:**  
Institutions must collect and use only the information necessary to improve students' education
  - **Clear Options:**  
Policies written in plain language ensure students can understand and elect to change or opt out of data collection





# QUESTIONS?

- Slide 9 Biometrics. Picture credit: MIT News. Search term “Facial Recognition” from Google Images.
- Slide 11 Learning Management System. Picture credit: matchr.com. Search term “Learning Management System” from Google Images.
- Slide 14 Equity and Bias. Picture credit: lww.org. Search term “Equity and Bias” from Google Images.
- Slide 15 [https://www.insidehighered.com/student-voice Data Defense: Privacy Protection Actions](https://www.insidehighered.com/student-voice/Data-Defense-Privacy-Protection-Actions)  
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## CITATIONS