How Short Is Too Short? Implications of Length and Framing on the Effectiveness of Privacy Notices

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(1) Privacy Policies
- We are inundated with Privacy Policies
- They are:
  - Too Long
  - Often in Legalese
  - People don’t read them
- We make shorter privacy notices, but including all of the pertinent information in the Notice can still generate a long Notice
- Two key ideas:
  - Add framing statements to increase focus and attention
  - Remove ‘well-known’/expected practices, to allow greater focus on practices that are surprising
- Goal of leading to higher awareness of all Privacy Practices

(2) Privacy Practices
- We chose to examine Fitbit Privacy Practices
- Fitbit is the market leader in Fitness Wearables
- Wide range of information collected
- Determined a list of Collection, Sharing, Selling, and Storage practices from Fitbit Website.
- Asked questions about these practices

(3) Our Study
- Three Phase M-Turk Study
- Phase 1 Notice Design (200 Mturkers over 4 Conditions, What Notice Format is Best)
- Phase 2 Baseline Knowledge (70 Mturkers, 1 Condition, What Fitbit Practices are Known with NO Notice)
- Phase 3 Notices, Framing and Length (400 Mturkers, 10 conditions (3 x 3 Positive/Negative/Neutral Framing x Short/Medium/Long + Control (i.e. No Notice))

(4) Our Notices

Positive and Negative Framing
- Short-Form notices were beneficial
- Older Participants/Women are more aware
- Diverse samples are necessary for testing
- There is a lower bound to notice length
- Information MUST be included, at a certain point

(5) Results
- Framing had no Significant Effect on Practice Awareness. No Interaction between Framing and Length. All Conditions did Better than the Control.

(6) Discussion and Conclusions
- Short-Form notices were beneficial
- All notices outperformed control
- Fitbit/Other companies do not currently use any type of short-form notice
- No effect of framing on awareness
- Shortest notices led to reduced awareness
- Medium notices led to equal awareness
- Some practices CAN be removed with no negative effect.
- Did not lead to improved awareness, but shows some information can be removed, possibly for reduced screen space?
- More focus should be spent on timing/layered notices.
- Specific results may not be generalizable, but the procedures/path specified are (e.g. 85%/70% cutoff from baseline)