

To save or to sacrifice: how to prevent interdependent privacy infringements in an app download context

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Consumers are frequently exposed to in-app requests asking to access their contacts. In a phone or digital device, contacts refer to the list of people and companies one has stored and may entail personal information ranging phone numbers to birthdates and social media connections. These requests pave the way for interdependent privacy infringements in which the actions of some individuals endanger the privacy of others. This paper explores simple interventions that make contacts salient to prevent interdependent privacy infringements. Our findings from four online studies suggest that the salience of individual contacts decreases consumers' willingness to grant access, i.e. give away other people's data. This finding is especially true for contexts in which the app is believed to require the contacts for functionality purposes and when the salient contacts are rather distant instead of close to the consumer.

Keywords: interdependent privacy infringements, mobile applications, victim salience

Track: consumer behaviour