

Privacy Literacy in Europe: Current Status and Its Implications

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Abstract

Digital services rely on advertising-funded models that often rely on data collection, to which several privacy initiatives, such as GDPR, require consumers to consent. One crucial question is whether consumers are knowledgeable enough to provide such consent. Using an online survey of 10,485 consumers across 12 European countries, we measure the economic, technical, and legal aspects of privacy literacy (pl) through a gamified quiz and derive scores for our measures of objective and subjective pl. We show that higher objective and subjective pl is associated with higher privacy concerns, increased protection behavior, but also increased data disclosure. Subjective pl is furthermore associated with a lower willingness to pay for privacy-friendly services, suggesting that consumers with higher subjective pl may underestimate the economic implications of data-driven business models and the value of privacy-oriented alternatives. Substantial differences persist across European countries.

Track: Digital Marketing & Social Media