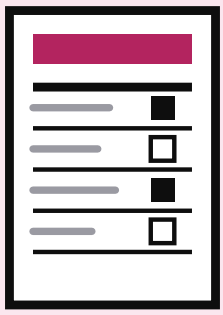
Concept

Privacy nutrition label

A fixed-format summary of a privacy policy, inspired by food nutrition facts, that shows at a glance what data is collected and what for.



In Spanish
Etiqueta de privacidad

Origin
Kelley, Bresee, Cranor and Reeder (2009), Carnegie Mellon University; inspired by the US Nutrition Facts panel

What problem it addresses

Almost nobody reads privacy policies: in an experiment, 74% skipped it when signing up for a social network (Obar and Oeldorf-Hirsch, 2018). Design takes from here a fixed format that can be read and compared in seconds.

An example

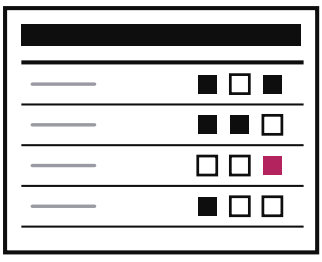
An illustrative example: you want to know whether an online store shares your email address with other companies.

Full policy



Several pages of text; the answer is one sentence, in the middle of a section. **You give up halfway.**

Label



A table with types of data in rows, uses in columns, and a mark where each applies. **You find it in seconds.**

Because the format is always the same, it also lets you compare two services without reading two long documents.

Why it happens

1

Reading every policy takes too long, so we accept without reading.

2

The label arranges the same content in a short table that always has the same shape.

3

It is quick to search and compare, and you finally know what you are saying yes to.

Applications in design

Use it like this

Summarize your policy in a fixed format, with the same rows and columns across all your products, and test it with real people.

Avoid

A label that leaves out the uncomfortable parts: if it summarizes, it has to summarize everything, including what is shared with third parties.

Don't fall for it

Having a summary doesn't give you permission to hide what matters in the long policy.

6.83 → 10.13



What the research says

Average correct answers from 24 people who looked up information in a privacy policy as text and as a label; with the label they took less than half the time (Kelley et al., 2009).

● ○ ○ **Single study.** It is a small lab study. An online study with 764 people confirmed that fixed formats work better than text and than layered notices (Kelley et al., 2010).

Connections

Used in

- Privacy by design

Related to

- Plain language
- Deceptive patterns (dark patterns)

Authors and works

2009	**Patrick Gage Kelley, Joanna Bresee, Lorrie Faith Cranor and Robert Reeder**	Designed the label through several prototypes and focus groups, and compared it with text policies.
2010	**Patrick Gage Kelley, Lucian Cesca, Joanna Bresee and Lorrie Faith Cranor**	Showed with hundreds of people that a fixed format works better than the full text and than layered notices.
2018	**Jonathan Obar and Anne Oeldorf-Hirsch**	Measured that almost nobody reads the policies when signing up, and that 98% missed absurd clauses hidden in the terms of service.

Sources

Original sources

- Kelley, P. G., Bresee, J., Cranor, L. F., & Reeder, R. W. (2009). A "nutrition label" for privacy. In Proceedings of the 5th Symposium on Usable Privacy and Security (SOUPS 2009), artículo 4. ACM. View source (https://doi.org/10.1145/1572532.1572538)
- Kelley, P. G., Cesca, L., Bresee, J., & Cranor, L. F. (2010). Standardizing privacy notices: An online study of the nutrition label approach. In Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI 2010). ACM. View source (https://doi.org/10.1145/1753326.1753561)
- Obar, J. A., & Oeldorf-Hirsch, A. (2018). The biggest lie on the internet: Ignoring the privacy policies and terms of service policies of social networking services. Information, Communication & Society, 1–20. View source (https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2757465)

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