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
  - Fitness Wearables are a growing market
    - 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
- Positive framing: Does not count as information from which you do not identify
- Negative framing: Can count the information that does not identify

Long(100%) Medium(85%) and Short(70%)

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

Medium and Long Length conditions performed equally. Short Length notices did worse, particularly on practices removed from the shortest notice.

(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?
- 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
  - 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)