Lesson 6: The Cost of Free

Adapted from code.org curriculum

Objectives: You will be able too…

- Explain how and why personal data is exchanged for use of free software
- Explain some of the privacy and economic tradeoffs involved in the collection and use of personal data
- Describe the ways and reasons organizations collect information about individuals
- Read and critically evaluate a data privacy policy

Getting Started

- Video – The Future of Big Data
- Last week, we looked at ways that data we willingly give away could be lost and used to compromise our security
- What we often don't think about however, is just how much data is being collected about us without us even knowing it
- Now, it's becoming easier for vast amounts of data about us to be collected and for it to be used for a variety of purposes

Getting Started

 The video mentions how your phone and websites you use track certain things about you. Today we're going to find out a little bit more about it.

 Here's what we are interested in:

 Why is tracking necessary? What are the benefits and drawbacks?

 How can you find out what kind of data is tracked about you and by whom?

Getting Started

- What do you know about data collected about you every day? Write down 2 or 3 websites, web services, or apps that you use the most or rely on the most…
- For each website/service/app fill in the following info:
  - Name of website/service
  - Do you have an account/login?
  - What kinds of data does (or could) this site potentially collect about you?
  - Do you know if this data is shared with other people, companies, or organizations?
  - Do you know how you would find out what data is collected or how it is shared?

Quick Poll:

- How many of the apps that you chose were free?
- Whip Around: name one piece of data the app you chose could potentially collect or know about you.

Examples:

- Education: Code.org, Khan Academy
- Social media: Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat
- Online store: Amazon, Target
- Search: Google, Bing
- Maps: Google Maps, MapQuest
- Productivity: Google Docs
- Mail and Communication: Gmail, Yahoo Mail, Skype
- Streaming Sites: Netflix, Spotify, Pandora
- Gaming Sites: Steam, Xbox Live
- Banks and financial institutions: Chase, Citibank

The point:

Ↄ That's a lot of data…

Ↄ If the stuff is "free," how do these companies make a lot of money?

    ↄ It stands to reason that we are "paying" for these services with our data, because that's the only thing we're giving them in return for a service

Ↄ What is the monetary value of your personal data?

Ↄ How is it used to make money? What are the tradeoffs?

Activity: Reading

- Reading: Wall Street Journal: Users Get as Much as They Give

- Read and annotate the text

Reading

- Right now, which way are you leaning? Too little privacy? Right amount?

- Are you willing to give up some privacy (and potentially some security) to have free access to modern innovative tools – do you trust companies to be good stewards of your data?

- Are you concerned? Do you think too much of your data is out of your control? Do you think too much personally identifiable data is given over to someone else?

- What other questions do you have?

Things to think about…

ଓ The Wall Street Journal – does this info have a "pro-business" slant?

ଓ What is the cost of free?

Activity: Privacy Policy

 When you use most apps, websites, and social networks, they are collecting information about you in exchange for providing you a service, like connecting with your friends or sharing photos.

 Sometimes the service itself, like GPS, needs to track you just to be a useful app

 Other times, the data collected is useful to the company for making money

Activity: Privacy Policy

ᔆ Most of the companies that do track your data work hard to balance the tradeoffs between providing you with a service for free and the inherent risks such data collection poses to your personal privacy and security

ᔆ But what do they actually collect and how do they use that data?

ᔆ Let's find out…

ᔆ Most of these companies have a clear, well-written privacy policy, we are going to each pick one to investigate

Activity: Privacy Policy

 You will use the "Privacy Policies – Activity Guide"

 Pick one of the apps/websites you chose at the beginning of class and go find and read through that site's privacy policy

Activity: Privacy Policy

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 Share out with your group of 3-4

 Share out with the whole group the following:

   The names of the companies

   Notable similarities and differences in the kinds of data collected

   Just the number: how many privacy policies let you access, modify or delete your personal data?

   Just the number(s): How did you rate the policies on how comfortable you were?

How about now?

- What is your "temperature" on data collection now?
- Are you leaning toward more privacy? Or the same/less as before?

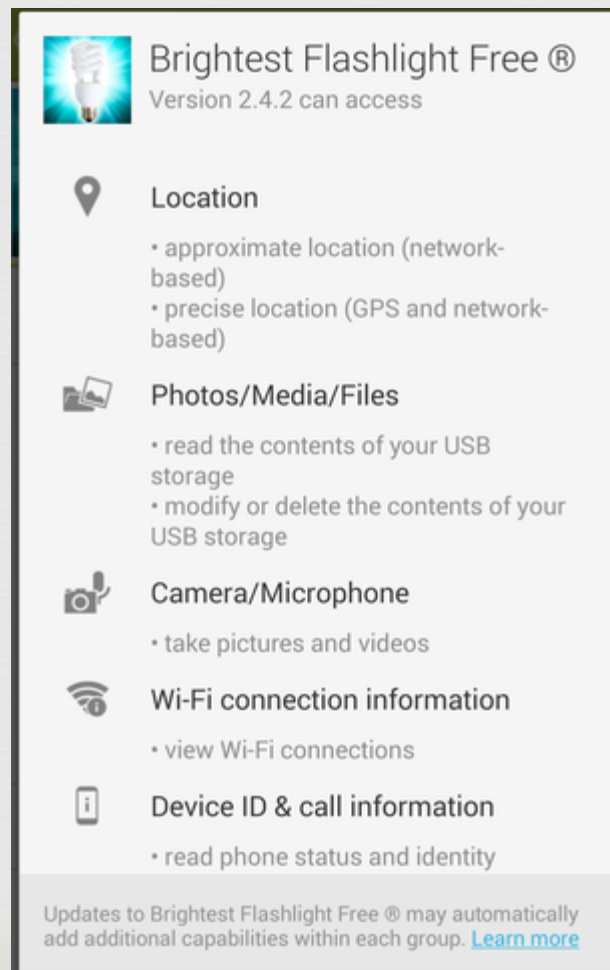# Wrap-up

ॐ Where do you stand?

   ॐ This lesson is entitled "The Cost of 'Free'" What does that mean to you now?

   ॐ How would you explain "The Cost of 'Free'" to a family member, or person you just met, if you had only 60 seconds?

Wrap-up:

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ভ Would you install this "free app"?

ভ What questions do you have?

ভ What would you want to know?

ভ What would you do to find that out?

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