

“This all seemed fairly normal to me”—The Absence of Effect of Privacy Policy Links on Invasive Personal Disclosure

Jennifer King, Center for Internet and Society, Stanford Law School

Rena Coen and Richmond Wong, UC Berkeley School of Information

Jael Makagon, Goldman School of Public Policy, UC Berkeley; Privacy Office, County of Santa Clara, CA

Andreas Katsanevas, Department of Communication, Stanford University

Abstract

Studies of privacy policies generally take as a given that people know what website privacy policies are, even if they do not read them. But the results of a recent experiment we conducted call this assumption into question. We found that approximately a quarter of the participants in our experimental study (n=901) may fundamentally misunderstand the intrinsic nature of a privacy policy. This finding provides a new direction for investigation, one that potentially raises additional concerns about the use of privacy policies as a mechanism for notice and consent.