Personalizing Privacy

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Abstract. Privacy concerns have been a nagging problem for the deployment of personalization over the past 15 years. Individuals' privacy preferences and behaviors vary widely though. Providers that collect personal information are therefore being asked or are even required to make their data collection and processing practices transparent, and to give users a say over how their personal data is treated. In practice though, people are overwhelmed by privacy choices and the rationality of their privacy decisions is limited.

   We found regularities among people's disclosure of personal data in smartphone and web shopping scenarios, and identified subgroups who exhibit different disclosure behaviors with regard to different types of data. Some of these groups also have unique demographic or behavioral characteristics that are relatively easy to determine. We additionally found subgroups who react differently to different privacy "nudges". We discuss the implication of these findings on the dynamic adaptation of privacy to the presumed preferences of each individual user, an alternative to the above-described "transparency and user control" paradigm that imposes overly difficult and unwieldy privacy decisions on users.