SHORT FORM PRIVACY POLICY TESTING

Lookout Mobile Security

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NB: This is a truncated version of the original report prepared as a submission to the Workshop on the Future of Privacy Notice and Choice being held at Carnegie Mellon University on June 27, 2014.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For our sessions on 8/23/13 and 8/26/13, there were 2 female participants (n = 2), and 10 male participants (n = 10), bringing the total of test participants to N = 12. However, due to one participant who did not accurately represent our user profile, data for that subject was disregarded, bringing the total to N = 11. This study focused on testing user understanding and perception of a short form privacy policy on mobile devices. The prototypes were positively received by all (100%) of participants. Problems arose with 1) users not understanding the null states buttons, and 2) users not reading the landing page text.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Critical Recommendations are changes that need to happen to reach usability standards.

1) Buttons: Not all users realized right away that the buttons were clickable. This was minimal. A bigger problem is that users did not immediately recognize that the null states, 1) were clickable buttons, and 2) meant that we did not collect that data, and had to open several to reach that conclusion. Changes to make the buttons appear more clickable are recommended; it would also be ideal if we could somehow convey the null state without requiring a user click.

Important Recommendations are changes that should happen, but will not prevent the product from reaching a reasonable standard of usability.

1) Top text: Not all users read the crucial text statement on the landing page, and a more than half looked through the long form policy for this information. It would be great if it appeared more important.
2) Hero image size: Several users commented that they saw “a fence” when I asked them what they were looking at. That plus the previous point lead me to recommend that we consider downsizing the image.
3) Copy for government sharing: Several users were aware that Lookout has to share data with the government when required, and felt that the copy
for this section was a little dishonest. I would recommend that we look at amending the statement.

**METHODODOLOGY**

The primary goals of the study were 1) To determine user attitudes and perceptions around privacy policies and trust in the company based on viewing the short form privacy policy, and to 2) Determine baseline usability for a short form privacy policy on a mobile device. The study was exploratory, but collected effectiveness data on button usage and users’ ability to meet goals. Data was collected regarding errors, prompts, and bugs. Qualitative data about users’ experiences and attitudes were also collected.

12 participants completed an in-person interview onsite at Lookout. One user was determined to be an outlier and was removed for a total of 11 (N = 11). In a within-subjects design, participants answered questions about their attitudes and behavior regarding the company and privacy policies, and then viewed two different prototype versions of a short form privacy policy on a Samsung Galaxy SIII. Version A did not show the null states (information we do not collect and information we do not share), and version B showed the null states. Counterbalancing was used such that six (6) participants saw version A followed by version B, and six (6) saw version B followed by version A. The removed outlier was included within group AB.
UX/UI CONCERNS

Buttons
1) 3 of 11 (27.27%) participants mentioned that they were unsure if the buttons were clickable, particularly the grayed out null states.
2) Users did not immediately understand that the null states meant that we did not collect or share whatever was represented; they figured it out, but they had to click back and forth several times to come to that conclusion.

Top menu
1) 3/11 (27.27%) participants attempted to use the “Privacy” nav at the top of the page to go to the long form policy.

Landing page text
Only 4/11 (36.36%) participants noticed that the text on the landing page stated that, “Lookout will never sell your personally identifiable data”. 6/11 users looked for this information in the long form policy, 1 was sure that we wouldn’t sell it and didn’t need to look, and 1 assumed that we didn’t based on the fact that “carriers” was the only thing listed under “Who do we share it with?”

Hero image
The fence graphic is very central, and given the point above, seems to command a little too much user attention, I think due to its large size. I’d recommend resizing it for future versions.

Color scheme
2/11 of users felt that the color scheme did not really match the app.

Comments
I think that overall participants liked seeing the null states because a lot of them expressed fears of their information being available or vulnerable to others, or expressed a serious dislike of unwanted emails or phone calls. Thus the information on who we do not share with was very reassuring and important. Users were most likely to have a bad moment on seeing we collect financial data, browsing history, contacts, or call logs, but were reassured by the information they received upon clicking because that information put the collection into
context. For example, we don’t collect your financial data unless we bill you for premium, and we don’t collect your contacts unless you use backup. I think that our next version should try a hybrid; removing the null states for data collected (irrelevant to our users), and keeping the null states visible for data shared (relevant to our users). It might be more beneficial for other companies to have a different arrangement (e.g. showing a null state for financial data if they do not collect it), but based on this round of research I think a hybrid will be best for Lookout.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

Reactions to the short form privacy policy:

- “You guys are on the right track with this. When it's more informative you put a lot of the concerns and the worries to rest. You feel more safer [sic] because everything is up front.”
- “Yeah I would find that helpful; I like to know what is going on with my stuff. I don’t think very many people read the fine print anymore. I think a lot of people just skip it.”
- “I think if a privacy policy was that way then everybody’s policy would get read. It would help a lot of people out if it looked like this.”
- “I’d like to see more of the applications and programs I use use a form like this to present their privacy policies. I think it's transparent and I mean …. Assuming that they are actually being honest about it, it could be really helpful.”

Impressions of Lookout based on the short form privacy policy:

- “I think this signifies a company that is very conscientious. A company that cares about people’s privacy and is aware of people’s concerns about how their information will be gathered, shared, and used.
- “It's not like you guys are trying to hide anything. You’re all transparent and stuff. I mean it says right there that you will never sell my personal data.”