

Major users, minor rights: e-privacy rights of minors



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1. Introduction

The internet (and other applications of ICT) has changed the nature of the individual's privacy because companies are able to collect personal data using forms (i.e. *explicit* data processing), in which individuals entrust information explicitly to companies. Furthermore, specific software allows companies to monitor the individual's online behaviour, based on the *click stream*, namely the surfing patterns of website visitors (i.e. *implicit* data processing).

The often surreptitious data-processing can be linked with personal data gathered in online forms but also with information collected offline, based on (among others) consumers' purchases. Companies are therefore able to draw a detailed profile of individuals to inspire targeted direct marketing communication. These practices create an area of tension between (online) marketing and personal privacy [2, 5, 9]. This much-debated subject has led to the distinction between informational and relational privacy [7, 10, 13]. Applied in online direct marketing, the *relational privacy* of an individual is the answer to the question whether or not, and possibly to what extent, a consumer wants to be approached by companies. Respecting the relational privacy means that a consumer is given the possibility to choose whether to be contacted for marketing purposes or not. This also forms a key aspect in the debate concerning *opt-in* (giving explicit consent to use data for direct marketing purposes)

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