Data Track with Data Portability

To meet transparency requirements pursuant to the EU Data Protection Directive (DPD) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) we have implemented a Transparency Enhancing Tool (TET) called Data Track (DT). The latest stand-alone version of the DT allows users to visualize personal data exports to data subjects. We have conducted usability tests in three iterations and observed that people were not aware of transparency, control functions and consequences of disclosing information. They often did not have a clear understanding of data portability and its benefits either. Consequently, correct mental models should be evoked and awareness of consequences and availability of transparency and control functions should be improved.

The purpose of our work is to study an ex-post TET tool (which shows what data has been disclosed and how data has been processed), the Data Track (DT), developed at Karlstad University (KaU). The DT which started as a part of the European PRIME and PrimeLife projects and continued as part of the A4Cloud project, provides users with an overview of the data they have disclosed to service providers under an agreed-upon policy.

Besides functions to meet transparency requirements, we added a new functionality to DT which helps visualize exports of personal big data to the data subjects. This function can provide users with an overview of the real location data they have disclosed to Google by exercising the right of data portability which Google provides to its users via *myaccount.google.com*. The right of data portability aims to increase user choices of online services, allows users to request data from the controllers and provides users with data in electronic form which can be transmitted to any other controllers. Our general research objectives aim to discover whether the concept of data portability is well-understood and to research how visualization of data exports can enhance usable ex post transparency for end users.

As the results from usability tests show that people do not have a clear understanding of what data portability means and why they should use it. They are not aware of its benefits and cannot think of a scenario in which they may need to transfer their data to another service provider. Correct mental models for data portability need to be evoked and people should be informed about its benefits and cases in which data portability may help them have a better online experience.

Now, many well-known service providers such as Google, Facebook or Linkedin provide users with some transparency and control functions but it seems people are not aware of their rights and they rarely exercise their rights by using the functions. Consequently awareness of transparency, control and data portability functions besides awareness of consequences should be improved.

Besides results from usability tests conducted on the latest version of DT, ongoing HCI research related to Credential EU project at Karlstad University will be presented briefly.

Farzaneh Karegar
Ph.D. Student in PriSec Group – Karlstad University
✉ *farzkare@dkau.se*