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You Think Your Children’s Data Should Be Private...These Companies Don’t



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Companies want your data.

Whether you call it data collecting, data mining, data harvesting, or any other name, the bottom line is that companies want your data. The more data they have on you the better they can sell to you.

We know this practice happens and it happens with a frequency that makes many of us very uncomfortable. What many of us don’t realize is just exactly who is being targeted.

Your kids.

We’re not just talking teenage kids either. We’re talking about the data being collected on children under the age of 13.



This was the revelation made in a recent [lawsuit against the creators of 42 apps aimed for children](#), including such corporate giants like Disney.

This wasn’t the first time that they’ve dealt with this issue either. There was [another case in 2011](#) that resulted in a civil penalty of \$3 million.

The buying power of children

Why children though? What possible benefit could there be to collecting data on those that are too young to actually buy anything?

It might be tempting to underestimate the influence that children have in the purchase decisions made in a household, but in reality this factor cannot be dismissed.

[A recent study showed](#) that children have a \$1.2 trillion (yes that’s trillion with a “T”) influence on purchasing decisions per year.

That’s a lot of influence.

Any way you cut it, when you start talking about trillion dollars influence (regardless of age) companies are going to perk up and take notice.



No company better understands the purchasing influence of children better than Disney, so it’s no surprise that they’re the ones that are pushing the boundaries of data collection.

The data is being collected on children for the same reasons data is collected on adults, so they can try to push other products and encourage other

purchases. If you’re wondering whether this type of practice is legal, rest assured that it is not.

COPPA can ban ya

In 1998 the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) introduced the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act, which governs the rights of children’s activities online much in the same way that [HIPAA governs healthcare data](#).

COPPA was further strengthened in 2012 when [the FTC added specific sections](#) to address the collection of data for children under the age of 13.

Websites and apps are now legally required to get permission from parents before they’re allowed to collect any data or information.

The act further specifies that the definition of data includes “geolocation data in addition to photos and videos, and it...has closed a loophole that allowed apps and websites to collection information through plug-ins.”

It goes without saying that this type of data was being collected on children very frequently before 2012...which is scary to think about.

You value your children’s data...they value it more

As parents we sometimes might get complacent with the apps our kids use. It’s understandable, anything that distracts them for a bit and gives you a break is a good thing right?...well, yes, but you still need to be careful.

Awareness is key. There are many websites, apps, and other online services that will try to collect data on your children. Knowing which ones do it is half the battle.

Do some research, ask other parents, and even test out the apps before you give your kids access to it. You can also provide as little (or as fake) information as possible. So even if the app collects data it wouldn’t be anything you would worry about.

Remember, by law they need to ask your permission before they’re allowed to collect data. So if you see anything suspicious reach out to COPPA and have them investigate, that’s what they’re there for.

Don’t let these companies collect data and influence your kids. Otherwise you’ll be adding your share to the \$1.2 trillion.

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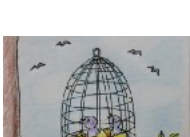
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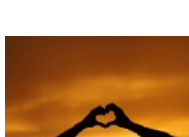
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