

Comparing Automation and Crowdsourcing of Social Media Privacy Setting Recommendations

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Background and Motivation

Web browser privacy tools (WBPTs) are widespread but often misunderstood, potentially doing more harm than good. Although these tools provide some protections, they lack effective controls for platform and server-side privacy on social media. Discrepancies between users' privacy intentions and outcomes often stem from misconfigurations. This project proposes a design experiment to explore and compare how automation and social nudging can support decision-making about social media privacy settings, with a particular focus on the interaction between *agency* and *trust*.

Research questions:

- “
1. How reassured are people with *assigning their trust* on what privacy tools claim to do?
 2. How can designers *balance ease and convenience with empowering individuals to make meaningful decisions* on social media privacy settings?

”

A Survey of the Social Media Privacy Tools

Past and existing social media privacy tools are automation-based: they scan platforms and provide suggestions for users to enact on.



ReclaimPrivacy.org
(2009, deprecated)

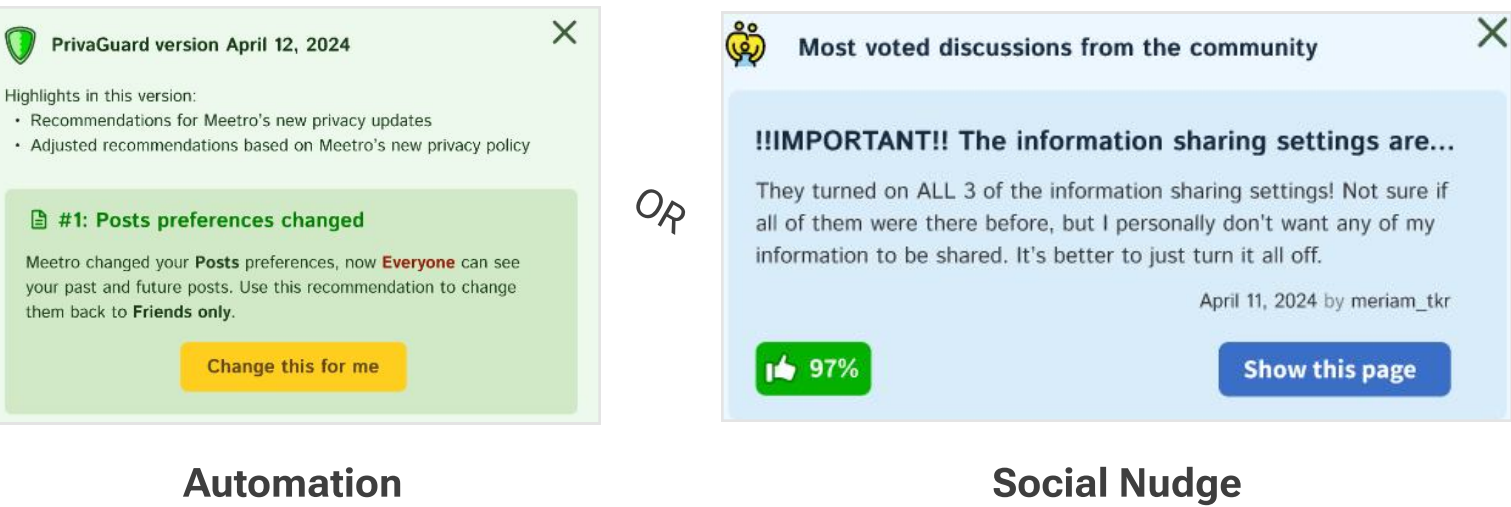
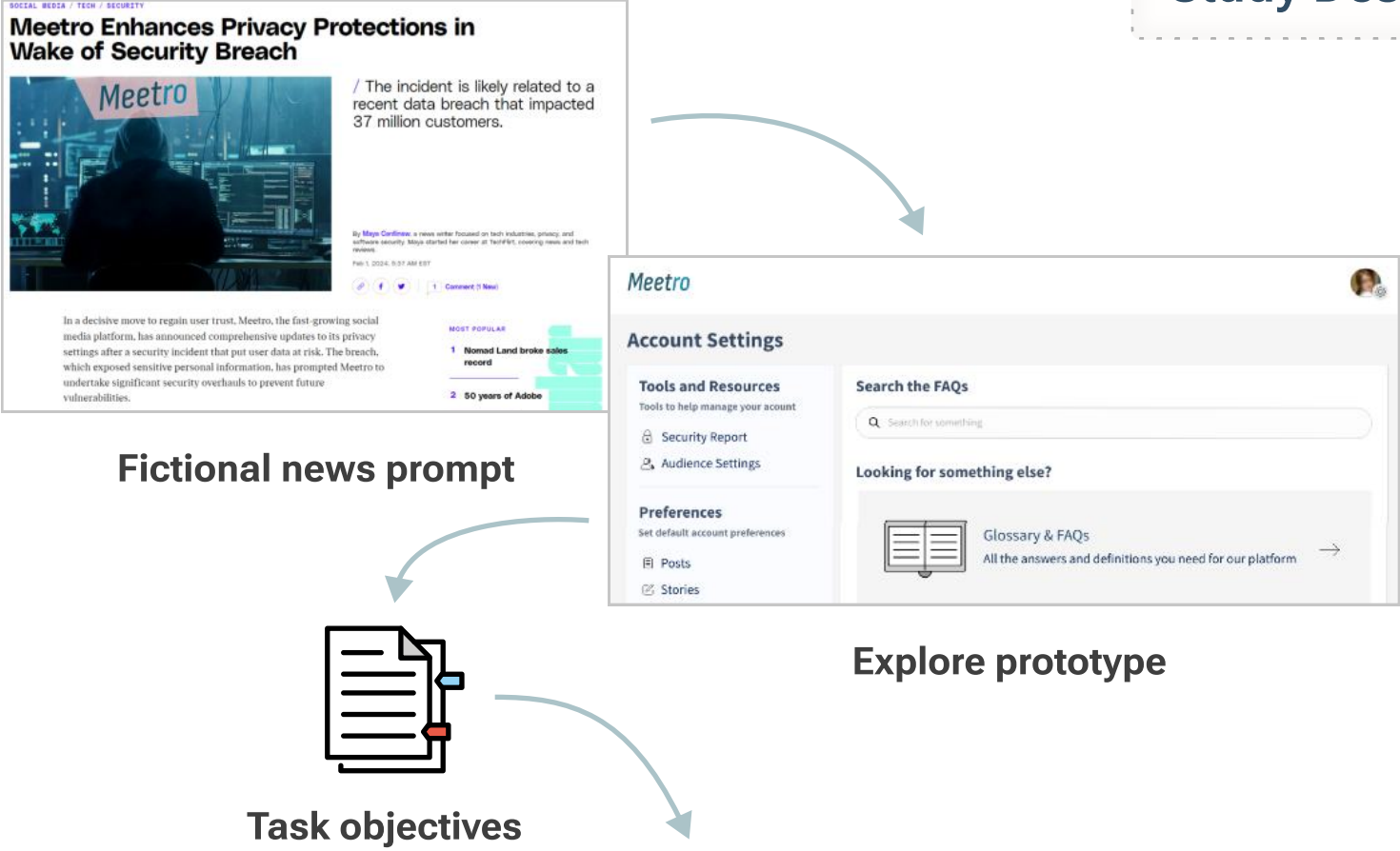


CheckSocial.net
(2012, deprecated)



BlockParty.com
(Current)

Study Design



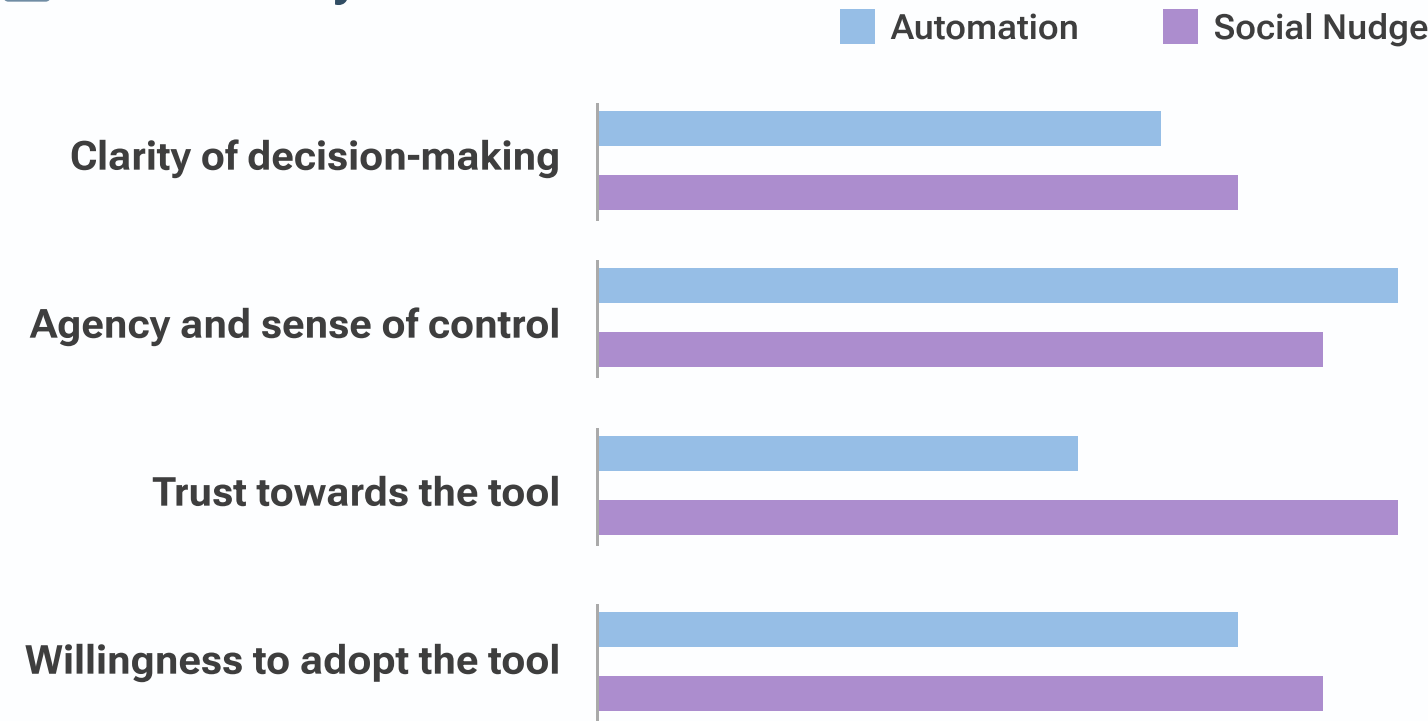
“I understand the decisions I made... I feel in control of my actions...”

Post-test questionnaire to measure constructs



Repeat experiment with the remaining condition

Preliminary Results



Observations and Reflections

- People initially trust the information presented in the automation tool, but have doubts when asked about it later.
- With both experiments done, social nudges are deemed more credible than automation and helps with understanding.
- People may care about privacy, but does that attitude necessarily reflect their privacy setting preferences?
- Do display language and emotional attachment to the platform influence how people manage their privacy settings?

Future Directions

A tighter study design and a larger sample are required to better understand how people enact their agency with WBPTs. Next steps: fine-tune the prototype and expand the project scope.