

Who Owns Your Data?

B2 | Adults / Teens | Reading + Vocabulary + Discussion | 50-60 minutes

BEFORE YOU READ

Talk with a partner. When you use a free app, what do you think the company receives in return?

1. Match the words (1-6) with the definitions (A-F).

- | | | |
|----------------|-------|--|
| 1. collect | _____ | A. permission to do something |
| 2. consent | _____ | B. direct something at a particular person or group |
| 3. profile | _____ | C. open and easy to understand |
| 4. privacy | _____ | D. gather information |
| 5. target | _____ | E. the right to keep personal information private |
| 6. transparent | _____ | F. a description built from information about a person |

2. Read the article. The bold words are the vocabulary from Activity 1.

- Every time people use a map, search for information or watch a video, they may create data. Companies can **collect** details about clicks, locations, purchases and interests. This information can help a service work better, but it can also be used to build a detailed **profile** of a person's habits.
- Most services ask for **consent** through a short message or a long list of settings. In theory, users can choose what information to share. In practice, many people accept the default options because the language is difficult or because they need the service quickly. A choice is not very meaningful if people do not understand it.
- Companies argue that data helps them improve products and show relevant advertising. A music app, for example, can suggest songs based on previous listening. Critics respond that the same information can be used to **target** people with advertisements, political messages or prices designed for a particular group.
- The debate is not only about secrecy. It is about power and **privacy**. If one company knows a great deal about millions of people, it can influence what they see and buy. Users may benefit from personalised services, but they may not know how decisions are being made or how long information is stored.
- Many people therefore want companies to be more **transparent**. They ask for shorter explanations, clear choices and an easy way to delete data. These changes would not end every disagreement, but they could give users a better understanding of the exchange behind a 'free' service.

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UNDERSTAND, DISCUSS AND WRITE

3. Comprehension. Answer in complete sentences. Use the article to help you.

1. What kinds of information can companies collect?

2. Why might consent choices be weak in practice?

3. How can data benefit users?

4. What concern do critics have about targeted data use?

5. What changes do people want companies to make?

4. Discuss. Talk in small groups. Give reasons and examples.

- Would you pay for an app that collects less data?
- Should personalised advertising be allowed?
- How much privacy are people willing to exchange for convenience?
- Who should explain data policies: companies, schools or governments?

5. Homework: Write an advice paragraph.

Write 140-170 words advising a friend how to make safer choices online. Include at least three practical suggestions and explain why they matter.

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ANSWER KEY AND TEACHING NOTE

Vocabulary matching

1. **collect** - D
2. **consent** - A
3. **profile** - F
4. **privacy** - E
5. **target** - B
6. **transparent** - C

Comprehension answers

1. What kinds of information can companies collect?

They can collect information about clicks, locations, purchases and interests.

2. Why might consent choices be weak in practice?

People may not understand the language or may accept defaults because they need the service quickly.

3. How can data benefit users?

It can improve services and provide personalised recommendations.

4. What concern do critics have about targeted data use?

It can be used to influence people with advertisements, political messages or different prices.

5. What changes do people want companies to make?

They want clearer explanations, simple choices and an easy way to delete data.

Teaching note

Compare vocabulary answers before reading. Help learners plan online privacy advice: three practical suggestions with reasons. Accept accurate comprehension paraphrases and supported personal responses.