

Data Generation

Facilitation Guide

Introduce learners to the concept of data generation and empower them to better understand how they generate data online.

Overview

This lesson will introduce learners to the ways in which they generate data online and will share strategies for how they can be more mindful about their personal data and privacy online.

For more information, be sure to watch Series 1 of the NYC Digital Safety Training videos.

Outcomes

By the end of this module, learners will be able to:

- Define and discuss data generation
- Explain how individuals generate data online and who is interested in that data
- Analyze and reflect on online personal data generation

Format + Time Frame

This lesson provides an information overview of data generation and leaves time for discussion and for learners to share their own thoughts and impressions regarding data generation.

This module will take approximately 45 minutes to complete. You can extend this lesson and offer a longer workshop experience by pairing this lesson with other lessons on topics including online account security, online tracking, and practices such as data minimization.

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Materials

- Slide deck
- Facilitation guide

Lesson Plan

| Activity | Materials | Time Needed |
|---|--------------------|-----------------|
| Introduction and welcome Greet learners and share the plan for this module | Slides 1 and 2 | 2 minutes |
| Defining data generation Provide a definition of data generation and pause to see if anyone has any questions or anything to add. | Slide 3 | 3 minutes |
| Overview of data generation Share a few ways in which we all generate data. Review the ways in which our data can be helpful to our experience, and also detrimental. | Slides 5 and 6 | 5 minutes |
| Activity: Data generation discussion Brainstorm what sorts of personal data people generate about themselves online | Slide 6 | 5 to 10 minutes |
| Overview of data generation online Discuss where personal data is located online and who is interested in that data | Slide 7 through 12 | 10 minutes |
| Discussion: Examples from participants | Slide 13 | 5 minutes |

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| Ask participants for examples of what data they share online | | |
| Overview Review the types of personal data that can exist online | Slides 14 through 16 | 5 minutes |
| Wrap up, final tips, and final questions Review the closing thoughts and see if anyone has any final questions. | Slides 17 through 20 | 3 minutes |

Considerations

Leave time for questions and discussions with this topic. Patrons might have questions and concerns about broader issues like privacy, security, and surveillance online, as well as more specific questions and concerns about the kind of data they might be generating on popular sites or platforms.

You might consider familiarizing yourself with some of the other, related lessons here to be prepared for the various questions (both broad and narrow) that might occur. Topics that could arise here include online privacy issues, online tracking, and personal profiles online. This lesson can go in different directions depending on the interests and questions of your learners, and you can also connect this lesson to other lessons as well. Be flexible with this content!

Options and Variations

This lesson lends itself well to a workshop or dedicated programming around digital safety and can be paired with other lessons for a more extended learning experience. Topics such as Data Minimization or lessons related to online privacy management, tracking, or social media accounts could pair well with the content here.

You can also use the key ideas in this lesson to engage with patrons at service points, as an alternative to offering a full workshop. For example, you can define the term data generation

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and engage a patron in a conversation around the kinds of data that we generate online, including our location and demographic information. You can also share handouts and resources from other modules such as Password Hygiene or Data Minimization to help patrons better manage their online privacy.

Assessment

The following are some suggested assessment questions that you can use and adapt for your own purposes. These questions can help you assess various things, including knowledge retention, personal views and preferences, and concept application.

You might consider asking these as a pre or post test, or you can have learners answer these as part of an exit survey or a follow-up survey. Keep reading for suggested questions and an answer key with further details and explanations.

Questions for Participants

What do you think data generation is?

[Free text response]

What information is available about you online? Write down what you can think of here.

[Free text response]

What are some things you can do to be more aware of the data you are generating online?

- A. Be thoughtful about what you choose to post and share online
- B. Think about who can see what you share online
- C. Use best practices to manage your online account security
- D. All of the above

Where is your data available online? Select all that apply

Places where you post and share information

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- A. Places where you comment or reply to others
- B. Your online accounts
- C. Stored in databases
- D. All of the above

Answer Key

What do you think data generation is?

Answer: free text

Use this question as a way to gauge your learners familiarity with this term and to see their thoughts. Data generation essentially refers to the amount of personal information we all produce, or generate, about ourselves online.

What information is available about you online? Write down what you can think of here.

Answer: Free text

Another question to see what you learners think. Some responses to look for include demographic information, location, search history and activity, and hobbies and interests.

What are some things you can do to be more aware of the data you are generating online?

Answer: D, all of the above

Being thoughtful about online activity and managing account security and digital safety and privacy and all ways to help manage personal data generation.

Where is your data available online? Select all that apply

Answer: E, all of the above

Personal data is available practically everywhere online!

Connections to Other Modules

This module connects to many other modules. The following suggestions provide opportunities for exploration, connection, and potential programming. However, feel free to explore and make connections between other modules not listed here as well!

1.2 Data Minimization

1.2 Password Hygiene

2.2 Social Media Settings

4.3 Thinking Critically

4.3 Technology Mindfulness

5.1 Privacy

These and other modules can be found at this project's website, nycdigitalsafety.org.

About This Project

These materials were released in October 2022 as part of NYC Digital Safety: Privacy & Security.

NYC Digital Safety: Privacy & Security is a partnership between New York City's three library systems — Brooklyn Public Library, The New York Public Library, and Queens Library — and METRO Library Council. With support from the New York City Office of Technology and Innovation, this project ensures that NYC residents can rely on public libraries for their questions about internet privacy and security.

Visit nycdigitalsafety.org for more information.