

Ethics and personal data

Course Overview

Summary

The use of personal data often creates a cause for concern. Either by the individual that the data is about, or by the user of that data in the creation of products and services. Personal data is often reviewed under a legal lens. The data protection regulations that are in place, often viewed as barriers, are the basis for discussion in the collection, sharing and use of personal data.

Beyond the legal discussion, the use of personal data brings about various ethical challenges. To use personal data ethically, we must consider how to mitigate the risks whilst maintaining the utility of data.

Learning Outcomes

Legal frameworks provide a structure for how personal data can be used. However, there are many data practices that boost the usability of data that may compromise the privacy of individuals. In this course you will explore and develop skills in handling personal data responsibly. To achieve this you will:

- Examine what constitutes personal data, and who owns the data about us in order to determine our rights to use and share data
- Investigate data anonymisation techniques, and assess the risks of re-identification and ethical implications
- Review approaches to balancing Data Utility and Privacy Protection, and propose appropriate approaches to anonymisation that enables usability whilst respecting the rights of individuals

Learning Experience

Number of modules	4 (+ reflective workbook)
Modality	Asynchronous / Self-directed / Online
Notional learning hours	2 hours (total)
Assessment	Formative
Certificate	Certificate of completion

Each module contains learning content that introduces the key concepts in the module, providing examples and case studies that demonstrate these concepts in practice. Each module contains a series of formative questions to support your learning. Learning is applied in activities throughout, supporting the learner to develop their understanding of personal data, and the ethics of its collection, sharing and use. To support learners in maintaining the utility and value of data, they develop skills in anonymisation techniques and apply this in an activity with feedback delivered by the Assistant AI Tutor.

Module Summary

Module Name	Description
<p>Ethics and personal data</p>	<p>Fears over collecting, using and sharing personal data often results in data not getting to those who need it. The challenge starts with understanding just what personal data is, the difference between this and sensitive commercial data, and the role of data protection regulations, which many see as a blocker to collecting, using and sharing personal data.</p> <p>This section aims to enhance your understanding of the differences between personal, sensitive personal, and sensitive commercial data, the significance of understanding data ownership, and the individual rights over personal data.</p> <p>To achieve this, you will develop your understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the differences between personal, sensitive personal, and sensitive commercial data ● the importance of understanding who owns personal data ● the rights of individuals over personal data ● the role of data protection regulations ● establishing a lawful basis for the ethical collection, use and sharing of (personal) data ● techniques to reduce the risks of handling personal data.
<p>How they watch you!</p>	<p>When it comes to Personal Data, we can often find that ethics and law are conflated. It can be assumed that because collection, sharing and use of data is lawful, it is also ethically permissible. But what happens if we then use data that isn't necessarily Personal Data, but still intrinsically describes the attributes, activities and behaviours of an individual? What ethical and legal</p>

	<p>considerations need to be made regarding the use of Personal Data, Sensitive Data and Non-Personal Data?</p> <p>howthey.watch/you is a hypermedia essay which continues Nick Briz’s decade-long activism and digital literacy work. It exposes the tracking technology built into our everyday experience of internet browsing.</p> <p>In this online work, the artist discusses this technology and asks important questions about its uses beyond fingerprinting and, ultimately, tracking. By exposing the misuses of this technology, Briz encourages viewers to take an active role in protecting their online privacy. As you experience the art work, consider what data is collected about you, as well as the data you use about others. Ask yourself:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How deeply do you understand the connections between the data and the subject? • Also, to what extent do you understand the legal parameters and the relationship between ethical data practices and work?
<p>How to anonymise data</p>	<p>Put simply, anonymisation is the process of removing or altering identifiable information in such a way that it becomes highly improbable that individuals will be re-identified from the data. It’s about protection for the individual, whilst maintaining the utility of the data.</p> <p>Anonymisation can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the removal of personal identifiers, • the generalisation and aggregation of data into broader categories, or • the randomisation of data, such as adding noise or the shuffling of values.
<p>Hands-on: Anonymising data (Assistant AI Tutor)</p>	<p>This course has explored the definition of personal data, sensitive data and sensitive commercial data. There are many reasons why we may use these types of data, but there are also many risks when it comes to handling personal and sensitive data. Anonymising data provides a</p>

	<p>safer way to retain and share data that is no longer personal, high risk and subject to data protection regulations.</p> <p>In this exercise we present a dataset relating to purchase ledger information. This activity requires you to follow some of the steps previously outlined and apply the appropriate anonymisation techniques to protect individual privacy whilst maintaining the utility of data. This activity requires you to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Review the dataset provided and identify the personal, sensitive and commercial sensitive data.● Determine the risks associated with these data points.● Apply anonymisation techniques that maintain the utility of the dataset, whilst protecting the individual privacy.
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