We Give Our Consent: Written Documentation

Introduction:
We Give Our Consent exhibition explores themes of privacy and consent in the digital age, considering ideas about how our information moves through cyberspace—and how blasé we've become to this movement—via a multifaceted interactive environment. It was created by Jeff Herriott, Nick Hwang, and A. Bill Miller, with support from media arts & game design research apprentices. The show was created for and presented in the Crossman Gallery at the University of Wisconsin at Whitewater from February 7-26, 2019.

We Give Our Consent includes a series of interconnected installation pieces which gather and display data from gallery-goers. In order to experience the show, the participants have to agree to share some of their data – their image, their voice, their Facebook account, etc – which is captured as participants engage in gallery activities such as playing games, observing specific components of the exhibition, or simply by walking around. This data then makes its way into other components of the exhibition, played back through audio devices or included in various other installation components. The exhibition's use of this data is relatively harmless but nonetheless shows how participants in contemporary digital culture have no real idea what they're giving away when they agree to terms and conditions. Furthermore, they don't really have a choice as to whether not they approve of the notion of giving away their data because it's almost impossible for anyone in our society to opt out of contemporary digital life.

FaceMash Program:
The FaceMash work is an amalgamation of several different entities: a mac on which participants must give their consent before they may enter the rest of the exhibit, and two more macs which rapidly cycle through all of the images FaceMash has collected. To give their consent, participants have two options. Almost all elect to consent to a digital signature, allowing the first mac to take their picture for use in the FaceMash cycle. The rest may instead sign a physical copy of the Terms and Conditions, and then go over to the final part of FaceMash, a wall full of laser-cutter-made masks of various shapes and sizes that such participants can wear in an attempt to protect their identity from the exhibition.

FaceMash personifies the concept of the digital footprint, where each participant who comes to the exhibition leaves a lasting mark on the internet that is *We Give Our Consent* for all to see. In the same way that parting with our personal information serves as a gateway to so much of the virtual world, allowing the exhibition unrequited access to one's image is a prerequisite for entry into the body of *We Give Our Consent*. While masks can serve to protect one's identity in a way analogous to people becoming someone different when they're online, their data is always a point of access; once this has been collected, it is quickly revealed that the disguise they have created provides

them with about as much anonymity as one of the little masks the exhibition offers its participants might.

Privacy Mashup: Voices of the Technological World
This video mashup consists of a mac computer using Max to randomly cut between clips of noted voices in the technological world speaking on the issues of privacy, data collection, and anonymity. It features Tim Cook, Mark Zuckerberg, Bill Gates, Alexis Ohanian, Steve Huffman, Larry Ellison, Denelle Dixon, Nicholas Martino, Finn Myrstad, Edward Snowden, Glenn Greenwald, Eric Schmidt, and Jack Dorsey, among others.

The Privacy Mashup seeks to comment on the veritable labyrinth of information and opinions surrounding the privacy related issues that the exhibition explores. It presents information in the same way that digital-age consumers remember it: short sound bites of the most notable, shocking, or powerfully worded moments of stories that are far longer than their representative clips might suggest. Logic and analysis are difficult and buzzwords and sensationalism reign supreme as the CEOs compete for the populace's continued support of their actions even as their critics' voices are increasingly less marginalized.

Observation Camera:
Immediately opposite of the mac showing the Privacy Mashup is a pc which is displaying live footage from a camera. This camera overlooks much of the exhibition, most notably providing a good view of the people watching the privacy mashup, as well as the wall where people must go to claim a mask.

The observation camera presents the participant with a sinister reality; we can never be completely sure who is watching. As people strive to assume a new identity in secret at FaceMash, they are already being monitoring. As they watch the privacy mashup, they likely have no idea that the person viewing the screen three feet away is monitoring them. Thus, the key moment for the observation camera is when participants work their way around the FaceMash kiosk and first realize that they have been secretly monitored as they moved through the exhibit. Whether or not they choose to indulge in the irony of watching people watch a video about online issue privacy issues themselves, they should feel a little disturbed and violated that the seemingly innocent activities of their fellow participants involved using them as viewing subjects without their direct consent.

Terms & Conditions:
Unlike a typical exhibition, the document containing *We Give Our Consent's* Terms & Conditions and Privacy Policy is an actual work presented for consideration by the exhibition's participants. This document is displayed in many ways: 1). As stapled copies for participants to read at their leisure, 2). As a rapidly scrolling message at the FaceMash booth, 3). Two different copies on entire walls of the exhibition, which have been magnified and printed on oversized paper, and 4). Outside the exhibition, scrolling

on a screen. Here, it is also superimposed over the Terms of Service of several noted technology companies.

Presenting the Terms & Conditions as art poses a new challenge to the age-old question of "what can be art?," forcing the viewer to consider how a utilitarian example of professional writing might be interpreted artistically. However, regardless of the viewer's conclusions here, the Terms & Conditions still have meaning in relation to the rest of the exhibit. Presenting this document in so many different places and ways parallels the manner in which such Terms of Service documents surround us in our everyday lives. However, there is little about this imposing, ten page wall of black and white text that draws the viewer in, no matter where or how it is portrayed. Instead, the work seeks to repel the viewer, almost resisting inspection in the same manner as real Terms of Service discourage a careful reading. Reading through this document in earnest and contemplating just how much one is signing away should provide the viewer with a poignant reminder of just what modern consumers are willing to give away thoughtlessly simply because of their unwillingness to closely read such a wordy document.

iPhone Hand Installation:
The iPhone hand is a wooden hand holding an old iPhone. It sits on top of a Mac Mini computer from which the phone draws power; it is left turned on and opened to the Camera app at all times. Considering the camera can be flipped, participants can photograph either the rest of the exhibition, people and all, or they can take a selfie, leaving their mark on the exhibition.

The iPhone hand is a simple and open-ended work whose lack of an obvious purpose or instructions will likely leave the viewer confused. Likely, they will either choose one of the above options, or else, just walk away. In truth, this exhibit offers a commentary on selfie culture as well as on privacy; indeed, many people chose to willingly take selfies on a phone whose origins, use, and owner were not known to them. This free release of one's image (or others' image, if they pointed the camera outwards) to the virtual world has a lot to say about our trust in such devices and the institutions that we assume to be sponsoring them.

Superimposed Posters:
Around the perimeter of *We Give Our Consent* exist four posters. Each one features a black and white image of a person from the internet with the Terms of Service of a different technology company (Google, Apple, etc.) superimposed over them.

These posters, as the only static and non-interactive element of the exhibition, should slow down the pace of the participant's experience in the exhibition and provide them a chance to reflect in earnest on what they've seen. The posters themselves offer several avenues of consideration as well. The superimposition of verbose text over the images suggest the manner in which the policies of tech companies overlay everything we post

online, whether or not we're aware of it. There is also the usage of images without their owners' consent up for offer here; the people in these images likely didn't expect them to be used in larger than life posters for artistic purposes. The viewer is encouraged to reflect on how ethical this type of usage is.

Angle Shooter Game:
The Angle Shooter game functions with a mac mini and a projector. Participants must scan a QR code or enter the appropriate web address into their mobile device's browser to play. They then may choose to log into the game with Facebook or to enter their own username. The game then begins. By pressing a button on the phone's screen, they can shoot data out of a their avatar, which has an arrow that swings back and forth indicating in which direction the data will go. The goal is to get as many data as possible into a mailbox that's moving up and down on the far side of the screen. However, a small avatar of Mark Zuckerberg freely patrols the screen, eating up all the data he can catch. Multiple players can join and work together, but if too much data is released onto the screen at one time, Mark will become bigger and perform a "Zuck Suck," consuming all data on the screen until none is left, at which point he resets.

By pitting the players against Mark Zuckerberg as an enemy, a clear statement is being made here: Facebook (and similar tech companies) are not our friend. Forcing people to literally act against them, and trying to make them feel frustration as their data is intercepted, portrays the tension that has become so defining a feature of the relationship between tech companies and the populace in the outside world. Zuckerberg's portrayal as a giant chomping mouth also encourages the players to look unfavorably upon him. Additionally, the fact that the vast majority of the data is intercepted and never reaches its destination is hyperbole for the sake of artistic effect. When the players see that they have sent 1,000 messages and only 120 have reached their destination, they should come to the realization that the internet isn't as safe and private a vehicle for communication as they might have believed. It forces them to think more deeply about a message transmission system that they had previously taken for granted. Lastly, if participants sign in to Angle Shooter with Facebook, their profile picture is displayed next to their avatar. This unanticipated use of their image without giving them a choice is a blunt reminder of just how universally accessible their personal information might be.

Voice Controlled Hacker Game:
Voice Controlled Hacker is a game where the player must use their voice as the controller. It consists of a Unity game with Max components running on a Mac computer hooked up to a projector and microphone. The object of the game is to survive for as long as one can by using one's voice to move an avatar out of the way of blocks of computer code… or sometimes, to blast right through them. Score increases with time, but also with each barrier destroyed. Certain blocks cannot be destroyed, however, so the player must choose carefully when to dodge (by making a higher or

lower pitched sound, depending on which direction they want to go) and when to shoot (by making a 't,' 's,' 'z,' or 'k' sound).

Voice Controlled Hacker stands in notable contrast to many of the other works in that it asks the viewer to step out of their perspective and into that of the "hacker"; the nameless enemy of privacy and thief of data whose presence can be felt throughout the rest of the exhibition. By asking participants to play *as* the hacker, the work forces them to adopt the goal of the villain: to infiltrate where they don't belong and to destroy those very things that are keeping people like the hacker out of their own personal information even as they play the game. As the music's intensity and the game's difficulty continue to increase, the player must struggle to keep up with the increasing difficulties that result from their past work, even as they struggle with the morality of what the game asks from them. Headphones near the computer that allow for spectators to watch and listen along allow a chance to reflect on this conjugation of the paradigm created by the rest of the exhibition.

Audio Cubes Installation:
The Audio Cubes were originally a set of three speakers contained in wooden boxes that were fabricated by a laser cutter. After a recent upgrade, there are now four audio cubes. Each audio cube stands on its own pedestal, and invites the user to rotate it, an action that results in the sound it generates being modulated. The source of the sound, however, is the audio input needed to play the Voice Controlled Hacker game on the other side of the exhibition.

The Audio Cubes are especially remarkable for how they engage the tactile sense; they encourage participants in the exhibition to pick up and physically manipulate data that belongs to someone else (more specifically, the voice that belongs to the person playing Voice Controlled Hacker). However, they also speak to the appropriation of such data; unless the player of Voice Controlled Hacker carefully read the Terms & Conditions, they are likely unaware that their voice is being transmitted somewhere else and manipulated by people who neither know them nor asked their consent. Interacting with the Audio Cubes encourages one to contemplate the implications of a digital culture where such covert and unsolicited usage of information and ideas is the norm.

About the artists:
Jeff Herriott is a composer whose music focuses on sounds that gently shift and bend at the edges of perception. His works, which often include interaction between live performers and electronic sounds, have been described as "colorful…darkly atmospheric" (New York Times) and "incredibly soft, beautiful, and delicate" (Computer Music Journal). In addition to his work in classical music, Jeff has composed score and soundtrack music for several recent films, including working with Rock & Rock Hall of Famers The O'Jays on songs for *Brawl in Cell Block 99* and *Dragged Across Concrete*. (herriotj@uww.edu)

A. Bill Miller, also known as 'gridworks1', has exhibited and screened his animated videos, abstract ASCII drawings, animated GIFs, and web browser-based compositions nationally and internationally. Bill also performs and experiments with live audio/visuals using custom software patches in traditional gallery exhibitions as well as Art, Technology, and Music Festivals (millera@uww.edu)

Nick Hwang is a composer and sonic artist whose work explores connections in art, technology and interaction. His research interests include live electronic/acoustic instrument performances, laptop ensembles, physical/gestural musical controls, and interactive musical systems. His on-going research projects include musical control involving touch surfaces, networked musical communication, laptop orchestra development, and programming for sound diffusion in loudspeaker orchestras. (hwangn@uww.edu)

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