

Research Participation Consent Form

Primary Investigator

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Project Title

A Comparative Analysis of Fitness Tracker Privacy and Security

Project Purpose

This project will look at the relationship between the data collection and transmission practices of fitness tracking devices, the cloud services they integrate with, and how third parties may obtain access to this information.

Andrew Hilts and research associates will analyze the privacy policies of each device studied. They will also perform a technical analysis of how these devices store personal data, how and to whom they transmit data, and the rigour of the mechanisms employed to secure these processes. They will assess various fitness tracker companies' responsiveness to right to information requests.

The project will result in an online "device guide" that will make it simple for individuals to compare various fitness trackers and file personal information requests with their fitness tracking device companies.

Your Participation

Your participation in this project would involve, with your consent, you conducting the following activities:

- Obtaining a fitness tracking device from the researchers, review, with the researcher, the device and how it works, and either consent to use the device as described below, request a different device, or withdraw from participating in the study.

- Follow the manufacturer’s instructions on using the fitness tracking device, including:
 - Installing the desktop application and / or mobile application that corresponds to the obtained tracking device.
 - Create accounts using the installed application and / or website.
- For a period of 2 months, follow the manufacturer’s instructions on recommended usage of the device in whatever capacity you are comfortable with, making an effort to collect as diverse a range of data as possible. You are encouraged to avoid any activities that make you feel uncomfortable for any reason. In those cases, please make a note of what activities concern you, and for what reasons.
 - If you are comfortable doing so, please share these notes with the researchers. Anonymized excerpts of these notes may be used in our research findings.
- After two months, follow manufacturer instructions and attempt to download your data into an environment outside of the manufacturer’s control.
- Complete a short survey about your experience using the device. The survey will be focused on the sorts of data collected and used by the fitness tracking device and its software ecosystem, as well as your technical proficiency.
- Using a tool made available to you by the researchers, submit a request under the Canadian federal consumer privacy law, PIPEDA, for access to all of the information the fitness tracker company has retained about you. Upon receiving a response, share this response with the researchers, redacting any information you are not comfortable disclosing to researchers.
 - The researchers will use this data to better understand how companies respond to access requests, and whether or not there are differences in what a user can access through the company’s applications or consumer portals, and whether or not there are any discrepancies between what a company’s policy says, what data it transmits to third parties, and how it compares to other companies.
 - If you do not receive a response within 30 days, please contact the researchers, who may instruct you to send a reminder to the company.

Duration of participation

Time spent	Activity
1 week	Initial receipt and setup of the device
2 months	Using the device as intended
1 week	Downloading your data
1 day	Complete survey
1 week	File access request
30 days	Wait for response (no activity required)
1 week	If needed, send reminder

30 days	If needed, wait for response to reminder (no activity required)
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Total time as a research participant: up to four months (including periods of inactivity)

Risks of participating

By participating in this study, you will be using a device that monitors your day-to-day activity. This can include fitness information such as the number of steps you take in a day, your sleep patterns, your location at a given point in time, potentially your heart rate during various activities, and potentially more data depending on the device. You may learn new information about yourself that could have negative effects on your self-esteem and perceived fitness.

This fitness information will also be stored and potentially transmitted to the device manufacturer or third parties. If you are at all uncomfortable with the prospect of this data being transmitted to others, you are advised to not participate in this study.

Benefits of your participation

Your participation in this project will help advance current knowledge about the privacy and security practices of fitness tracking companies. This project can potentially encourage these companies to adopt more privacy-friendly practices and improve their security.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The researchers undertaking this study do not have any financial relationship with fitness device manufacturers, and our lines of inquiry are motivated by the pursuit of knowledge. We do not believe there to be any conflicts of interest associated with our administration of this study.

If you or a member of your immediate family is an employee of, or otherwise has a financial arrangement with any fitness tracking company, you are ineligible to participate.

Your rights as a participant

You have the right to withdraw from participation in this study at any time. At the time of withdrawal, you will be requested to return your fitness tracking device to the researchers in order to receive your honorarium for participation.

You have the right to refuse to conduct any or all of the activities described earlier in this document without fear of reprisal or ill treatment.

You have the right to be informed of how your identity will be protected in the publication of the data.

You have the right to be informed of the limits of confidentiality.

Compensation for your participation

Participants will get to keep the provided fitness tracking device, plus cash. The total value of the honorarium will not exceed \$200 in value, and include the price of the device in addition to a top-up cash payment.

Damaged and Lost Devices

If, over the course of your participation in the project, your fitness tracking device becomes damaged, please contact Andrew Hilts. There may be budget to replace the device, but you will be required to return the original, damaged device. Lost devices will not be replaced.

Project Funding

This project is funded by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada as part of its Contributions Program for 2015-2016.

Filing a Complaint

If you have reason to believe this research project has been conducted unethically, you may file a complaint with the Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research, part of the Government of Canada's Panel on Research Ethics. The Secretariat may be reached at:

350 Albert Street
Ottawa, ON
Canada
K1A 1H5

Tel: (613) 996-0072
Fax: (613) 996-7117

E-mail: secretariat@rcr.ethics.gc.ca

Source: <http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/contact/>

Signatures

Principal Investigator:

I hereby certify that the activities undertaken by research participants for this project correspond to what is described above. Any information provided to our project by participants will be stored on an encrypted, password protected computer, or in a locked filing cabinet in a secure physical location.

Date

Research Participant:

I hereby certify that I agree to participate in the research project described in this document, am aware of and consent to the activities asked of me, the risks and benefits associated with my participation, and my rights as a participant, including the right to withdraw at any time.

Date:
