

New app aims to discover how your phone uses your personal data

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Today sees the launch of a new research project which aims to find out how people value the personal information held on their android smartphones.

Nearly every step you take, physically and on the web, can be traced, but while smartphones and tablets are becoming more and more common, few people have given much thought to how their personal information is being used by the companies and app developers they sign up for.

Many companies offer their apps for free in exchange for use of the personal information of [consumers](#), usually without a direct monetary

benefit to the individual, arguing that if people cannot place a value on the information, then it must be free. Consumers find it difficult to track what their information is being sold on for and what profits companies make from selling on the data to third-parties.

The project is being led by Dr. Bernadette Kamleitner, from the School of Business and Management, and Dr. Hamed Haddadi, from the School of [Electronic Engineering](#) and [Computer Science](#), who want to discover the price that consumers would attach to their personal information.

Dr. Kamleitner explains: “Personal information is a huge and poorly regulated business. Although consumers can benefit from the use of their information by receiving customised offers, others also use individual’s data to make money. We hope this project will help us to understand which information people consider more or less valuable to them, and will allow us to show whether people genuinely believe that ‘personal information has no price’.”

The study will see volunteers asked to install a free [Android](#) app on their mobile phone which will ask them some basic questions about their background and lifestyle. Then, over the next two weeks, the app will pop up a daily questionnaire asking what you are doing, how you feel about that, where you are, who you are with, and how much the information would be worth to you, mimicking the sort of data companies extract from your phone.

More information: As well as the chance to participate in the research, all volunteers will be entered into a prize draw to win Amazon Vouchers worth between £10 and £100.

To take part in the study, please visit: www.privacyvalue.org/index.html

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