

# Envisioning future experience of online data privacy

## Introduction

Data privacy has become increasingly complex and critically urgent in today's digital society. As individuals engage with various online services, vast amounts of personal data are continuously collected and analyzed through different digital platforms and services. Even with the protection of GDPR in the EU, privacy risks persist in everyday life, which could become more subtle and complex due to the rapid development of the socio-technological context.

While privacy goes beyond mere compliance, it's about **empowerment**. Privacy threats are deeply embedded in everyday digital experiences, often invisible, making it difficult for individuals to recognize them. Besides, privacy is inherently subjective, meaning its significance and interpretation vary widely among individuals. Traditional privacy research, often grounded in legal or technical compliance, tends to overlook these personal, situated experiences. **This project argues that it is crucial to help people become aware of and reflect on privacy, as it is essential to developing more nuanced understandings of the concept.**

Additionally, speculative design and future studies played a key role in this project, which were used to challenge conventional thinking and propose a range of alternative futures. Future design and speculative design are used to open up new possibilities for the transformation and innovation of services. In doing so, the work contributes to an evolving body of research that views design as a tool for critique and change, inspiring various future possibilities. **The project advocates for future design practices rooted in individual empowerment and reflective experience.**

## Research question

**How can design empower individuals to reflect on and envision their online digital privacy?**

Based on these, the study focuses on two interrelated and progressive **objectives**:

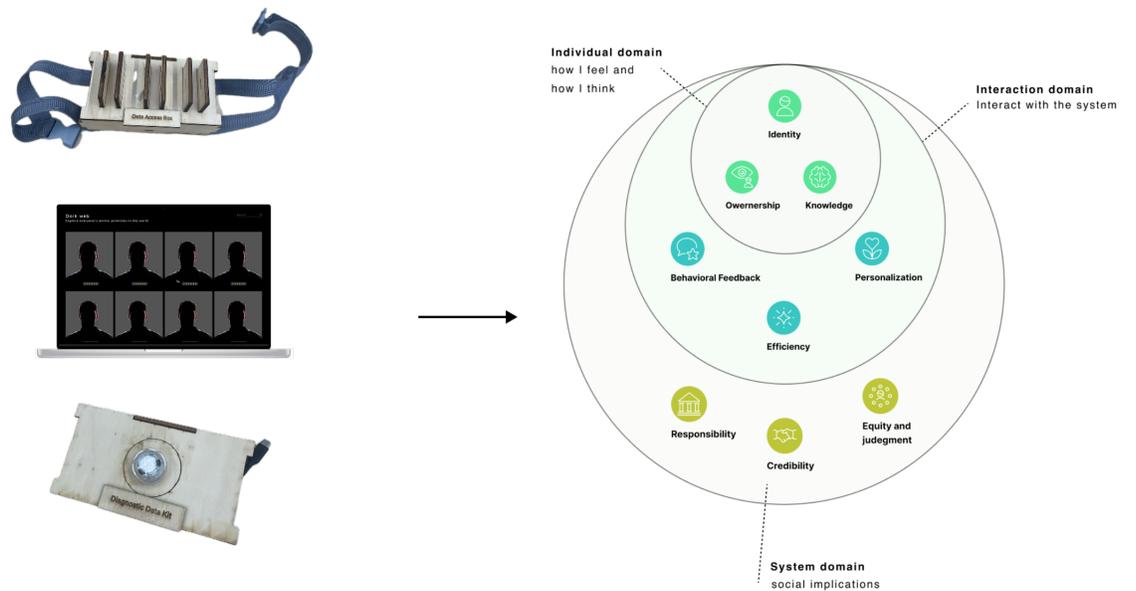
- Raise awareness and gather collective insights
- Envision the alternative future intervention of online privacy in users experience

### RQ1

**Raise Awareness: How could speculative design help provoke individual awareness of online data privacy?**

To address this questions, we firstly grounding the privacy risks in the context. We understand the risks current socio-technical context of online privacy. The findings include the privacy threat towards individuals developed from the theories, case study grounding in the real world risks and the individual concerns and from auto-ethnography study.

We expand the research insights by exploring "preposterous futures" in the collection, processing, and storage stages of data practice. Set in "preposterous futures" in speculative design, three speculative design artifacts were developed based on collection, processing, and storage stages of data practice, with follow-up participatory workshops to raise awareness. The findings reveal a collective individual's concerns about their future privacy and helped us build on understanding of online privacy.

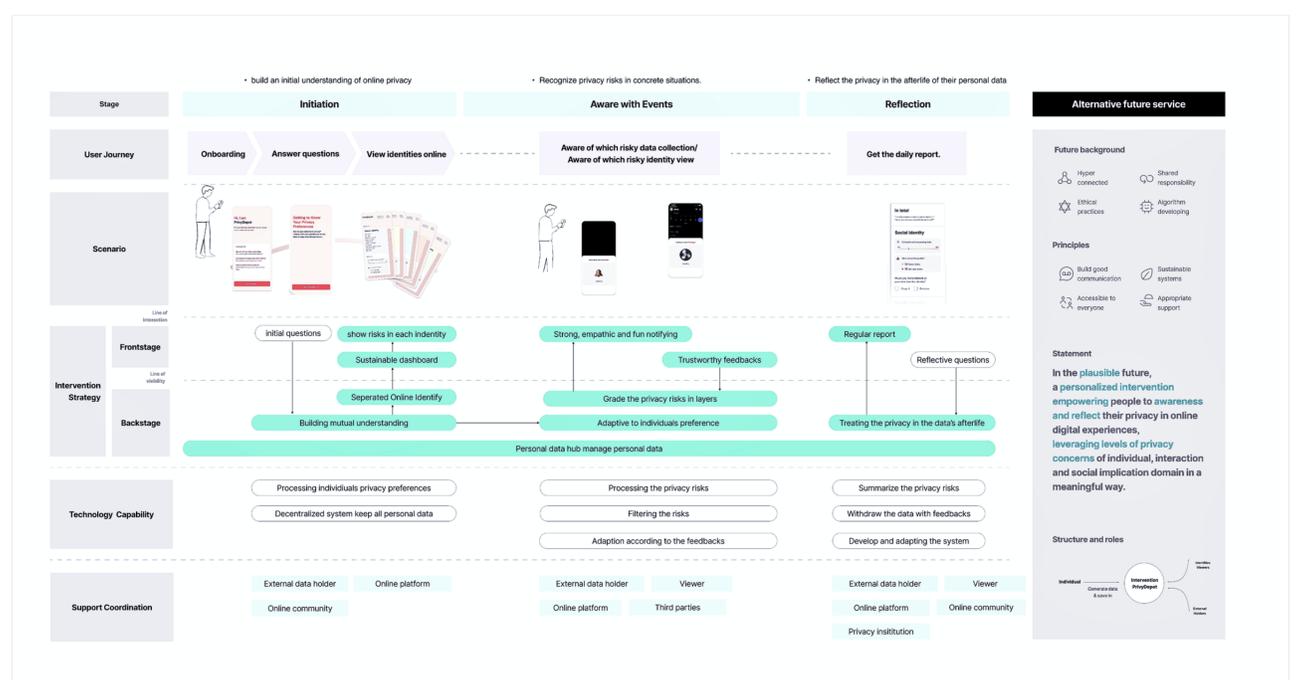
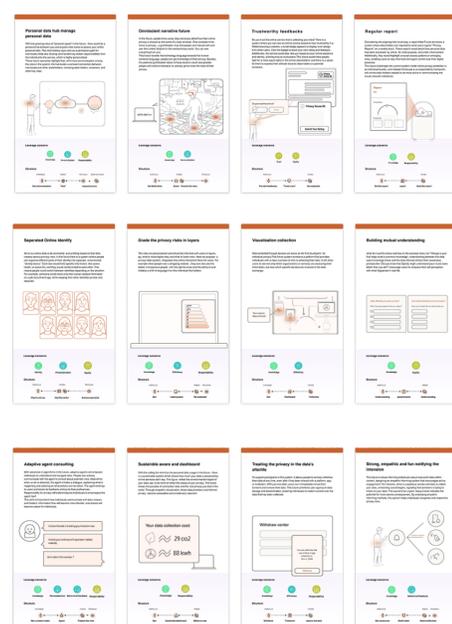


RQ1

### RQ2

**Envision alternative future: How can design leverage the collective opinions into meaningful and plausible futures?**

Leveraging collective insights, we explore plausible future possibilities, where insights collected from individuals are translated into concrete future service and design concepts. In this phase, the alternative future intervention "Echoes of Privacy" is developed. Set in a near-future world, this intervention envisions a new paradigm of sustainable privacy that, with the proper structure, could empower individuals. The alternative service can be accessed by participants with a tangible prototype and a future narrative.



RQ2

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