

Privacy and confidentiality

I. Learning objectives

- To understand data collection issues and violations
- To recognize data collection issues and violations
- To identify personal data protection violations
- To resolve personal data protection violations

II. Target group(s)

x Master's students

x Doctoral students

x Supervisors

III. Determining a story

The Research Innovations Centre has recently received a proposal to investigate a cogeneration power plant that was recently built in the city. The initial goal of the study is to explore the experiences of the local people regarding the pollution caused by the cogeneration power plant. Mark and Taylor, researchers at the Research Innovations Centre, invited local NGO personnel to contribute to the research by collecting data together with the researchers. In the first project meeting, the NGO's leader, Ana, expresses the expectation that the study should reveal that the city is suffering from pollution caused by the cogeneration power plant. The leader of the NGO also insists that Mark and Taylor collect the data from a group of local people specified by her. She explains that these are the local people who have already written complaints about the cogeneration power plant to the relevant state institution. According to Ana, the state institution will provide the contact details (e.g., names, surnames, and email addresses) of the people who filed the complaints. In the meeting, Ana also said that NGO personnel had already collected some interviews about local people's experiences. During the meeting, it appeared to Mark that the NGO wanted to obtain particular research results and conclusions. After Mark expressed his concerns to Taylor, they explained to Ana that this method of reaching local people contradicts the principles of personal data protection and raises ethical questions concerning the protection of the personal data of the research subjects.

What should Mark and Taylor do?

Answer options

1. The researchers should continue working with the NGO personnel in the project: as the state institution provides the contact data, it is also responsible for issues concerning the protection of the personal data.
2. The researchers should ask the NGO's leader, Ana, to withdraw from the study due to inadequate data protection and non-compliance with research ethics principles.
3. The researchers should ask the NGO's leader, Ana, to select other, unbiased informants to participate in the research.
4. Before the project starts, the researchers should explain to the NGO personnel the privacy and confidentiality details of the CS project and that they should agree to the terms and conditions of the research. They should also explain what personal information may and may not be collected, how it is to be shared, and what actions should be taken to prevent or limit its potential misuse.

IV. Game design elements

Instructions

Option A1 Topic-by-topic, individually

For learners:

- familiarise yourself with the topic in the *Guidelines* (10 min), then
- read the corresponding vignette (10 min),
- choose one answer option (4 min), and
- access the score and the feedback (1 min).
- Follow-up discussion. Share your answers and discuss the choice you have made and the rationale behind the choice (10 min).

Total duration: 35 min

Option A2 Topic-by-topic with a facilitator (in-team)

For a facilitator:

- inform learners of the time allocated to read the topic in the *Guidelines* (10 min), then
- introduce the corresponding vignette (e.g., by reading) and the answer options (10 min),
- explain how the answer options should be understood and emphasize that only one answer option may be chosen (5 min),
- once the chosen answer options are reported, summarise the results and announce the right answer (5 min),
- present scores for all answer options and discuss the options using feedback (5 min), and
- actively moderate the discussion.

Total duration: 35 min

Answer scores	
1. The researchers should continue working with the NGO personnel in the project: as the state institution provides the contact data, it is also responsible for issues concerning the protection of the personal data.	0
2. The researchers should ask the NGO's leader, Ana, to withdraw from the study due to inadequate data protection and non-compliance with research ethics principles.	5
3. The researchers should ask the NGO's leader, Ana, to select other, unbiased informants to participate in the research.	5
4. Before the project starts, the researchers should explain to the NGO personnel the privacy and confidentiality details of the CS project and that they should agree to the terms and conditions of the research. They should also explain what personal information may and may not be collected, how it is to be shared, and what actions should be taken to prevent or limit its potential misuse.	10
Feedback	
<p>Mark and Taylor should explain to the NGO that all the information collected in the CS project about the case of potential pollution, including information on those who provided the data, should be kept securely and confidentially. Researchers are obliged to inform the citizen scientists involved in the project of technical details concerning the collection and treatment of personal information; in this case, researchers must inform NGO personnel and ensure that all the participants in the project follow the procedures. Mark and Taylor have to ensure that the personal data on research subjects are kept securely to avoid personal data protection violations. Researchers, in this case, must ensure that NGO personnel are aware of the privacy and confidentiality details of the CS project and agree to the terms and conditions of the research, for example, that the data must be password protected with limited access and not be available to third parties. The research subjects who provide information must know that their personally identifiable data (in this case, concerning complaints) will be held fully confidentially.</p>	

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