

CARNEGIE MELLON TEAM RELEASE FINDINGS ON STUDENT DATA PRIVACY STUDY

WASHINGTON, DC - In a report released today from Carnegie Mellon's Heinz College, new research examines how educational technology startups balance limited resources and privacy concerns. The graduate researchers found that a disconnect between education providers and edtech startups may be due to the limited consideration startups put into creating, much less communicating, their privacy practices.

Additional findings include that, with startups' limited resources and emphasis on product development, privacy isn't often a priority. Interestingly, the venture capital companies that invest in these educational technology companies do little to encourage their investments to adopt better privacy standards. According to the report, the greatest motivator for startups to adapt and improve their privacy practices is the requirements of clients - often school districts.

"This report shows the vital role that school districts play in incentivizing EdTech companies to adopt better privacy protections, and it emphasizes that investors and incubators need to prioritize privacy when funding companies," said Amelia Vance, Policy Counsel at the Future of Privacy Forum, a nonprofit focusing on privacy leadership and scholarship. "Privacy needs to be built into EdTech products from the beginning, and investors are ideally situated to insist that start-ups have a culture of privacy."

"The study shows that protection of student privacy by education technology startups evolves with customer and community input," said Mark Luetzelschwab, President of Eduphoric, an education product agency. "Education technology startups have an unenviable task of balancing protection of student privacy against cost, time, and mission."

Researchers did in-depth interviews with a number of selected startups to find out more about their privacy policy development and practices. While only exploratory, the study asks important questions about startups can best protect student data and effectively communicate with the public regarding privacy.

A summary of the report's findings can be found [here](#).

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About the Researchers: The research team of graduate students from the School of Public Policy and Management at Carnegie Mellon University, H.J. Heinz III College (Heinz College) includes Niels Smith, Mandi Prichard, Elizabeth Martin, Daisy Huang, Flora Horvath, and Joseph Babler. Andrew Richman acted as the faculty advisor for the project, which was conducted over eight months.

For more information or a copy of the report, please contact studentdatacmu@gmail.com.