Abstract:

Standardized privacy labels that succinctly summarize those data practices that people are most commonly concerned about offer the promise of providing users with more effective privacy notices than full-length privacy policies. With their introduction by Apple in iOS 14 and Google's recent adoption in its Play Store, mobile app privacy labels are for the first time available at scale to users. We report the first in-depth interview study with 24 lay iPhone users to investigate their experiences, understanding, and perceptions of Apple's privacy labels. We uncovered misunderstandings of and dissatisfaction with the iOS privacy labels that hinder their effectiveness, including confusing structure, unfamiliar terms, and disconnection from permission settings and controls. We identify areas where app privacy labels might be improved and propose suggestions to address shortcomings to make them more understandable, usable, and useful.