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Museum-Partner Observation #3

The development of digital technologies gives people an opportunity to access the endless flow of information that users can share and exchange with each other. However, “[t]o participate in online information exchanges, users must trust third-party platforms with sensitive information, creating more opportunities for it to be compromised” (“Privacy Concerns” 32). Cultural institutions such as museums and libraries are using digital technologies to enhance visitor’s experience and to convey the stories in a new way. In order to make new experiences safe and comfortable “it is vital [for museums and libraries] to implement a responsible and legally compliant development process in the creation of such [technologies] that make use of visitor information” (“Privacy Concerns” 32).

The Cooper-Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, my museum-partner, went forward not only in introducing new technologies that enhance visitor’s experience, but also in developing the system that provides security for user’s personal information. As it is said in the Smithsonian Institution’s privacy statement, “[t]he Smithsonian Institution does not collect personal information about visitors to our Websites unless you choose to provide that information to us. The Smithsonian will use that information to respond to your message and to help us get you the information you have requested” (par. 1). The Cooper-Hewitt museum uses the pen that was developed within the museum walls, and allows visitor to collect objects and access to them later. The pen is paired only with the visitor’s ticket which means that the user of the pen remains anonymous (“Privacy and the Pen” par. 1). “This is the result of a series of specific design

decisions to minimize and anonymize data collection wherever possible” (“Privacy and the Pen” par. 2).

What is more, the museum provides its users with an ability to prevent their data from being used by Google Analytics by developing the Google Analytics opt-out browser add-on for the Google Analytics JavaScript (ga.js, analytics.js, dc.js). The Google Analytics opt-out add-on is designed to be compatible with Chrome, Internet Explorer 11, Safari, Firefox and Opera (“Cookies” par. 2). Moreover, the Smithsonian requires credit card processing be secured based on compliance with Payment Card Industry (PCI) standards which means that whenever the visitor uses his or her credit card for any purchase on a Smithsonian Website, that transaction is always encrypted when traveling over the Internet (“Security” par. 1).



Image 1. Copper-Hewitt museum webpage showing the information about the pen that allows visitors to enjoy the museum anonymously

Works Cited

- “Cookies.” *Cooper-Hewitt*, <https://www.cooperhewitt.org/privacy/>. Accessed 24 Apr. 2018.
- “Privacy Concerns. Wicked Challenge: Those that are complex to even define, much less address.”
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- “Security.” *Cooper-Hewitt*, <https://www.cooperhewitt.org/privacy/>. Accessed 24 Apr. 2018.
- “Smithsonian Institution’s Privacy Statement.” *Cooper-Hewitt*,
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