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Museum Informatics

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Museum Observation 3

The New York Historical Society Makes it clear what their privacy policy is on their website. This page touches on a number of important technological issues in the modern museum world such as cookies, information sharing and online transactions. The NYHS makes it very clear the difference between types of communication and information that is confidential and non-confidential.

One important piece of the privacy policy are cookies, which are small web files saved on the computer based on recent internet traffic. The NYHS says, "The cookies we use do not contain any personally identifiable information about you; they are generally used to gather information to analyze website traffic in order to improve our content and navigation, based on our visitors' online behavior."¹ This means that a user who visits the NYHS website has no personal information saved through the website.

¹ Privacy Policy, New York Historical Society, Accessed April 23, 2018, <http://www.nyhistory.org/about/privacy-policy>.

Emailing the Historical Society

If you email the Historical Society, your message and email address may be saved by the Historical Society and we may send you emails in order to inform you of special events or promotions. Email recipients may opt out at any time by following the "unsubscribe" instructions included in the email message.

Any message, material, business information, ideas, concepts, or other information sent to the Historical Society by email will be treated as non-confidential and non-proprietary.

Email Communication

The Historical Society regularly sends email to our website visitors. Email recipients may opt out at any time by following the "unsubscribe" instructions included in the email message. Registrants may subscribe or unsubscribe at any time by changing their email preferences online.

The next important piece of the privacy policy is when an individual emails the institution. The NYHS says, "Any message, material, business information, ideas, concepts, or other information sent to the Historical Society by email will be treated as non-confidential and non-proprietary."² It is important for users to read this because if someone emails the institution that information will be used and shared within and outside the organization, though no personal information will be used or saved, unless for email listservs or if explicitly asked for.

Cookies

This website uses "cookies," or small data files that are automatically sent to your browser from a Web server and stored on your computer's hard drive. The cookies we use do not contain any personally identifiable information about you; they are generally used to gather information to analyze website traffic in order to improve our content and navigation, based on our visitors' online behavior. You may choose to set your browser so that it does not accept cookies. For an optimal experience with our site, we recommend that you allow cookies.

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² Privacy Policy, New York Historical Society, Accessed April 23, 2018, <http://www.nyhistory.org/about/privacy-policy>.

The third important part of the New York Historical Societies privacy policy is security of online transactions. Online shopping and purchasing is a key part of business growth in the modern age, which means that credit card information is used on a number of web platforms. The NYHS points out that they use a third-party service called “Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) encryption,”³ which privately and safely processes online payments. The institution also points out that no credit card information is stored through their private server.

Security

The New-York Historical Society protects personally and non-personally identifiable information that it receives via the Internet against unauthorized access.

In addition, the Historical Society’s website uses Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) encryption to process online transactions, such as those made through our online store and ticketing systems. By using this technology, online users can feel confident that their personal information is protected from interception by any third party. Sensitive credit card information is not stored on any NYHS Web server and though order information is retained for our records, this information is never shared with other companies or persons. Further, the Historical Society has processes in place to maintain conformance with PCI DSS (Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard).

It is important for the user to protect his or herself against unauthorized access to his or her password and computer. We advise that the user use a known and trusted secure connection and to log off when finished using a shared computer. The user should be aware that there is always some risk involved in transmitting information over the Internet. There is also some risk that others could find a way to thwart our security systems. As a result, while we strive to protect your information, we cannot ensure or warrant the security and privacy of any information the user transmits to us, and the user does so at their own risk.

As technology increases and internet use goes up it is important for users to be careful and alert with websites that ask for private information. The legal ramifications on the institutions can be severe if caught using private user information. The NYHS makes clear that they do everything they can to keep personal information safe, but also mention “while we strive to protect your information, we cannot ensure or warrant the security and privacy of any

³ Privacy Policy, New York Historical Society, Accessed April 23, 2018, <http://www.nyhistory.org/about/privacy-policy>.

information the user transmits to us, and the user does so at their own risk.⁴ When using web sites for online shopping, research or fun it is important that users hold on to their personal information because in some cases their privacy may be in danger.

⁴ Privacy Policy, New York Historical Society, Accessed April 23, 2018, <http://www.nyhistory.org/about/privacy-policy>.

Bibliography

Privacy Policy. New York Historical Society. Accessed April 23, 2018.

<http://www.nyhistory.org/about/privacy-policy>.