

# Aging and Privacy: Implications for Personal Information Management

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## Abstract

In this position statement for the 2022 PIM Workshop, I outline my personal reflection on the implications for personal information management (PIM) and PIM tools concerning managing personal information privacy as people age.

## Position Statement

Every person engages in some form of personal information management (PIM) activities. According to Jones (2012), PIM activities can be categorized into keeping activities, finding activities, and meta-level activities, where “managing privacy and the flow of information” is one type of meta-level activities. In this position statement, I refer to “managing personal information privacy” as the efforts people put into controlling *who* else should access to *what subset* of their personal information in *what* circumstances and for *what* purposes. As many aspects of our lives become increasingly digital and shared online, the management of personal information privacy largely operates in the digital space: on personal computing devices, on productivity web and mobile applications, in shared cloud computing storage, and via social media. Drawing upon my prior research in data privacy, I present two areas of future research at the intersection of aging and privacy, and their implications for PIM and PIM tools, specifically for the PIM activity of managing personal information privacy.

**Changing privacy expectations and behaviors.** Privacy research has shown that people from different age groups exhibit relatively distinct online information disclosure behaviors (Goldfarb & Tucker, 2012). It is likely that people's expectations and behaviors for personal information privacy change as they age, possibly in a multi-faceted way. For example, a young adult may feel comfortable publicizing some escapades on social media that they may deem inappropriate years later. Also, anyone may change their mind about sharing certain information with someone as their real-life relationship shifts. To manage who should have access to what subset of our personal information for how long is not an easy task, even without the consideration of our changing privacy expectations. Therefore, I believe there is an opportunity for longitudinal research to examine how people's privacy expectations and behaviors change over time, so that we can build PIM tools with appropriate data privacy functionalities to help people better manage their personal information privacy over time.

**Multi-party privacy in caregiving settings.** Many people, particularly older adults, need care from others for certain aspects or at some point of their lives. Typically, care receivers need to share some of their personal information (e.g., schedule, finances, health information, online accounts) with their caregivers, which may include family, friends, and caregiving professionals, to ensure the quality of care. Vice versa, care receivers or their family may use smart home devices (e.g., cameras, sensors) that collect information from caregiving professionals while working in their homes. Many of these caregiving settings often involve sharing or transferring sensitive personal information across multiple people and entities, which is often referred to as multi-party or multi-stakeholder privacy (Yao, 2020) that has complex privacy implications. Therefore, there is a need for in-depth research to articulate the privacy needs of all the stakeholders in caregiving settings. PIM tools designed to be used in such settings should consider personal information privacy needs of all the stakeholders involved.

## References

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Yao, Y. (2020). *Privacy for Whom? A Multi-Stakeholder Exploration of Privacy Designs* (Doctoral dissertation, Syracuse University).