Poking at the Cloud: Identifying Factors Behind Selective Cloud Uploading

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Background

Cloud storage users do not think the cloud is fully secure or private

Q: But if they do not think it is secure, why do they use it?
A: Users report managing privacy and security by choosing what they do or do not put on the cloud.

Research Questions and Desired Outcomes

Research Questions

- How do users determine when and how to put information in the cloud?
- Do users’ projections of a cloud platforms’ agency and interests inform uploading and sharing decisions?
- What social and/or organizational factors influence uploading and sharing decisions, and how?

Long-Term Goals

- Better motivate privacy and security advice for cloud users
- Create contextually aware privacy/security options for cloud storage and sharing
- Identify how organizations can drive individual users’ security practices

Methodology and Preliminary Findings

Semi-Structured Interview
- Do you use Dropbox, Google Drive…?
- Subjects look at their files
- How many of your files in Google Drive are shared?
- Could you talk about how you would share financial data? Your diary? Passwords?
- Are there any files you have in the cloud that you would be worried if unauthorized people were able to access?

Limitations
- Hypothetical response may not relate to actual behavior
- Social pressure may affect sharing behavior

Cloud Usage
- Security not an issue to many (“My files are boring”)
- Yet… multiple (non-security) reasons for not using cloud storage
- Social or organizational reasons main factor behind storage platform choice

Sharing
- Sharing/privacy tradeoff not common formulation (email often a preferred alternative method for sharing sensitive information)