

STUDENTS —
NOT PRODUCTS



An Action Handbook for #StudentsNotProducts



This handbook was created by the Human Rights Watch Student Task Force team to help us launch our efforts to advocate for digital privacy protections in our school and district.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 12

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation.

Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights lays out the fundamental human rights that every person in the world has simply because they were born human. These rights are universal and absolute. Article 12 of the UDHR lays out the right to privacy.

Digital Privacy is a Human Right.



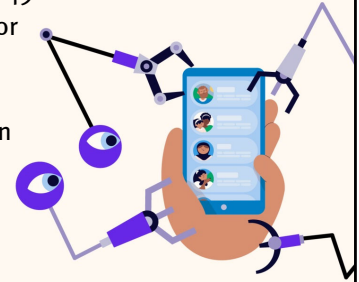
- Privacy, online and offline, is a fundamental human right.
- It helps protect other human rights like free speech, free association and assembly and access to other economic and social rights.
- Children have a right to education without their privacy being violated.

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What is #StudentsNotProducts?

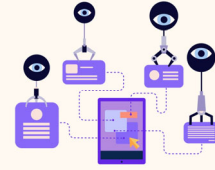
- During Covid-19, students' digital privacy was violated by educational technology (EdTech) companies.
- EdTech companies surveilled and harvested students' personal data including age, location, location within the house and even fingerprints.
- When HRW investigated more than 150 EdTech products recommended by 49 countries, more than 140 engaged in data practices that may have risked or infringed on children's rights to education and privacy.
- They sent this data to advertising tech (AdTech) companies who could then analyze and sell information to governments, private companies or law enforcement.

As a result of these investigations, HRW created #StudentsNotProducts.



The Covid pandemic forced students and schools across the world switched to online learning. Human Rights Watch investigated how these online platforms managed student data. (read slide)

Key Terms



Educational Technology (EdTech)

Software that is used for educational purposes in an educational setting or that processes student's data.

This includes software used by administrators, systems used to deliver teacher's lessons and materials, such as Google Classroom or Zoom, and systems that provide lessons themselves, such as Khan Academy. ([Privacy International](#))

Advertising Technology (AdTech)

Companies that collect massive amounts of data about people to target them with ads tailored to their presumed interests and desires. ([HRW](#))

Data

Information in digital form that can be transmitted or processed. ([Merriam-Webster](#))

EdTech companies researched by HRW collected students' data like location, age, family structure, school performance or even fingerprints.

There are some key terms we want to go over before we continue this presentation. Has anyone heard of these terms before? Does anyone have questions about them?

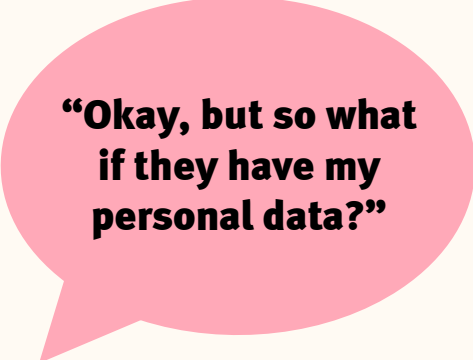
Why does #StudentsNotProducts matter?



- Schools, governments, and private companies failed to protect students' human rights to education and privacy by endorsing these EdTech products.
- Data was collected from students and teachers without their consent or knowledge.
- Students' reliance on digital services that enable their education has and will continue long after the Covid-19 pandemic.

It's now up to students to use their voices and take action.

(After reading the slide, state a couple "I statements" to emphasize your feelings regarding this issue. For example, "When I heard about #StudentsNotProducts, I was shocked about the results, and became concerned about my privacy rights at school and beyond.")



**“Okay, but so what
if they have my
personal data?”**

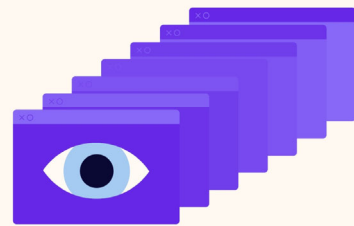
- How would you feel if EdTech or AdTech companies knew your location and favorite food?
- What if they knew where you live and your parents’ immigration status?
- What if they sold that information to the government or law enforcement?

Seemingly small violations of our right to privacy can open the door for major concerns.

In any instance, selling your data without consent is a violation of your human rights.

Some people might say: “Okay, but so what if they have my personal data”. Let’s walk through a couple scenarios.

Are these violations concerning? Yes.
Can we protect ourselves? Yes.
Will it change? It's up to us.



It's clear from this that yes, we have to change. And yes, we can change, schools can implement policies that protect students' right to privacy. The question is: will we change? And that's what we're here to talk about.



10 steps to get your school to protect your digital privacy

Now on to the main point of this presentation...

Step 1: List Your Goals

What do you want to accomplish with your advocacy? What can you accomplish given the time and resources you have?

Here are some examples of goals:

- School/district conducts a privacy audit of all EdTech products
- School/district reviews current data privacy policies and release the results to students, parents, and teachers
- School/district answers our data privacy questions and we/they release their response to students, parents and teachers

The first step is writing out our goals. It's important that we have a clear idea on what we want, especially as we start working with other students or talking to teachers and administrators. HRW has provided some example goals that we can use as reference, however we should also think about what we need at our school. We know that some of these goals may not be accomplished this semester or school year. We should also keep in mind that we don't have to know all of the details about what is and isn't possible yet. We just need to know our ultimate goal.

Step 2: Find Allies

Committed allies will keep you going. They are essential. You'll need:

- **Peer Allies** (STEM/STEAM clubs, computer/coding clubs, other STF chapters, other students who care about human rights)
- **Adult Allies** (motivated parents or the PTA, school alumni, Booster Club)
- **Allies “inside the system”** (STEM or technology teachers, history or social sciences teachers, administrators)

Building our ally network is something we do for every STF educational and advocacy campaign. This one is no different. As a group, we need to identify who we should talk to to get their support for this campaign. Which clubs might be helpful with education, hosting events or engaging classmates in our advocacy? Are there teachers, administrators or parents that can help with on- and off-campus events and discussions? Or even to help us navigate next steps with decision makers? Who else within our community at large might be supportive?

Step 3: Identify Important People

These are the people you will have to convince. No need to contact them yet, but it's good to know who they are and how inclined they might be to support you.

- **Decision Makers:** Administration (Principal, Dean, etc.), School Board, Board of Directors
- **Implementors:** Facilities Manager, Director of Technology or IT, Department Heads (if you have one)

(read slide first) Some of these people may overlap with our list of allies, but it'll be important to know who they are so we can adjust our outreach strategy accordingly. For example, we might give our principal or head of school the ally presentation to introduce the campaign, but they will also ultimately be one of the people making decisions about whether to implement these privacy policies. We might alter our ally ask to acknowledge their larger role in this discussion, emphasizing that the first conversation was to inform them of our goals.

Note: Some of these steps could be happening simultaneously.



This might seem like a linear process, but it's not. It's going to be messy, and that's okay.

Step 4: Build Your Understanding

- Find out what has happened or is happening with data privacy at your school and at the district level.
- Identify the most frequently used EdTech products your school uses and see if any of them appear in [HRW's report](#).
- Review the digital privacy questions created by #StudentsNotProducts. See if you can find any answers yourself.
- Watch or share these videos which discuss #StudentsNotProduct's research:
 - #StudentsNotProducts: www.youtube.com/watch?v=qBWpnRIIYdA (1:33)
 - Digital Privacy is a Human Right: www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqhDwggFov8&t=1s (0:58)

The STF team has provided us with a questions to figure our what privacy protections are currently in place on our campus. This step is really important and how we start researching what is going on in our specific school and district.

Data Privacy Questions from HRW

- Who is responsible for student data privacy at my school (and in my district)?
- What is each EdTech product doing with students' data privacy?
 - What data does it collect from children, how does it collect our data, and with whom does it share students' data?
- Has anyone checked if these EdTech products are safe for minors to use?
 - Did the school or district conduct, or rely on, a technical privacy evaluation or a child rights impact assessment of each EdTech product before deciding on their use?
- Did the school or district pay for licenses or enter into contracts with companies? If so, what safeguards were required of companies to take to protect children and their data?
- Is the school or district using these products for free? If so, what safeguards did you take to protect students' and teachers' data?
- How is the school or district protecting children's data privacy?
 - What measures are in place to protect against tech companies collecting, using, and sharing data, for reasons that have nothing to do with education?
- Do parents, teachers, and students have any say in how a student's data is collected, shared, and used?

In a future meeting, we'll personalize the questions to what we already know or think we know about our school, so we can target the things we for sure don't know yet.

Step 5: Build Community Support

Reach out to community members (teachers, parents, students, and other community leaders), it's time to build your coalition!

Get broad community support:

- Educate your campus community by tabling at lunch or doing simulation events
- Meet with the PTA or other parents' groups
- Collaborate with peer or adult allies on events/education activities
- Write an op-ed or collaborate with school newspaper

Note: This seems like the simplest step, but it might take the most effort. Also, it's okay if you are still completing other steps at the same time.

Building our ally network will be an ongoing process. It seems like the simplest step, but it might take the most effort. We need to be persistent and continue to reach out to our network to ensure they are staying engaged with our efforts. We will take time in a future meeting to brainstorm the best way to keep everyone updated.

Step 6: Contact Your Campus Decision Makers

- Schedule a time to talk with your principal or administrators about your concerns around data privacy. Make sure to include why this is important.
- Prepare for the meeting by drafting an agenda. Come with a clear ask.
- Consider sharing the data privacy questions with the decision maker beforehand, so they can prepare answers for your meeting.

Read our [How to Talk to Campus Decision Makers guide](#).

(read slide)

Step 7: Meet with Campus Decision Makers

- Talk about your concerns around data privacy. Make sure to include why this is important and the data privacy questions HRW provided.
- Be friendly, empathetic and explain why this is important to you and your peers. Assign a notetaker who takes detailed meeting notes.
- Work with the decision maker to lay out next steps, and deadlines for these action items. If you go to a public school, your administrators will likely mention that this is a district-wide issue or requires district action.
- Follow up with a thank you email and a reminder on action items.

In our meeting with campus decision makes, we will...

Step 8: Meet with School District Leaders

- Once you've done the work on your campus, research who your school board members are.
- Email them to schedule a meeting to talk about your concerns around data privacy.
- Make sure to include what school you go to, who you've talked to on campus, and why this is important.

(Skip the slide if you are a private/independent school)

As a public school, a lot of the decisions about which products we use are made at the district level. Once we know what our school administrators know, we will go to school district/board meetings and get them involved in the conversation. (read slide)

Step 8: Meet with School District Leaders

If you do receive a response/invitation to meet:

- Prepare for the meeting by creating an agenda. Include the data privacy questions and information from campus decision makers.
- Consider sharing the data privacy questions with the decision maker beforehand, so they can prepare answers for your meeting.
- Assign a notetaker. Work with the member to lay out next steps, and deadlines for these action items.
- Follow up with a thank you email and a reminder on action items.

(skip the slide if you are a private/independent school) Depending on how the district leaders react, we may take different steps forward.

Step 8: Meet with School District Leaders

If you don't receive a response or invitation to meet:

- Email the data privacy questions and ask for a response by a specific date.
- Inform them if you do not receive a response by the specified date, you will make a public comment at the next school board meeting.

Step 9: Push Decision Makers

Decision Makers still skeptical? You can try...

- Holding a town hall
- Organizing a strategic protest or demonstration of support
- Reaching out to your student newspaper or local journalists/press
- Making a public comment at the next school board meeting
 - Use the public comment script STF provides as a guide. Practice speaking in a loud, clear voice and within the time limit the school board provides.

The STF team has resources and talking points for when our decision makers are skeptical or not responding to us. But some ways we can stay on their radar are by (read slide)

Recommended Public Comment Script

My name is _____ and I attend _____ school. We would like to express our concern regarding the data privacy protections of students at _____ school in _____ district.

Students should be safe in school, whether that is online or in person. During the Covid-19 pandemic schools, school boards, and governments around the world endorsed the use of education technologies (EdTech) during Covid-19 school closures.

But when Human Rights Watch investigated more than 150 EdTech products, recommended by 49 of the world's most populated countries, they found that most weren't safe for students to use. Many EdTech products surveilled students, harvested their personal data, and sent it to advertising tech companies.

We – students, parents, and teachers – were kept in the dark. We depend on technology to learn, more than ever. As students spend increasing amounts of our childhood online, our reliance on the connected world and digital services that enable their education has continued past the Covid-19 pandemic. We should not have to give up our right of privacy to learn. We are students not products for sale.

I have already/tried to reach out to _____ school board member to discuss these questions and received _____ as a response. I am here today to continue this conversation on students' data privacy.

We ask you the following questions to understand what our school/school board is doing to protect our fundamental privacy rights: (read data privacy questions from HRW)

If we need to, we can use this public comment script to talk to our school board.

Step 10: Keep Up the Work!

- After sending thank you emails to school/district leaders, send follow up emails with any updates from your chapter's work (newspaper articles, town hall events, simulation events). When you're reaching an action item deadline, follow up.
- Work with your STF chapter and HRW staff member to reconsider what allies or resources you've had yet to tap into.
- Persistence communication is core to advocacy work.
- Ask other STF chapters what they have done for additional ideas.

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Roles for everyone!

You may be asking yourself, what role can I play in this effort? We need EVERYONE to be involved! Here are some ideas to get started:

- Presenters and speakers
- Outreach/Communications managers (internal and external)
- Researchers
- Social media managers
- Graphic designers
- Notetakers
- And more!



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