Why should your clients care?
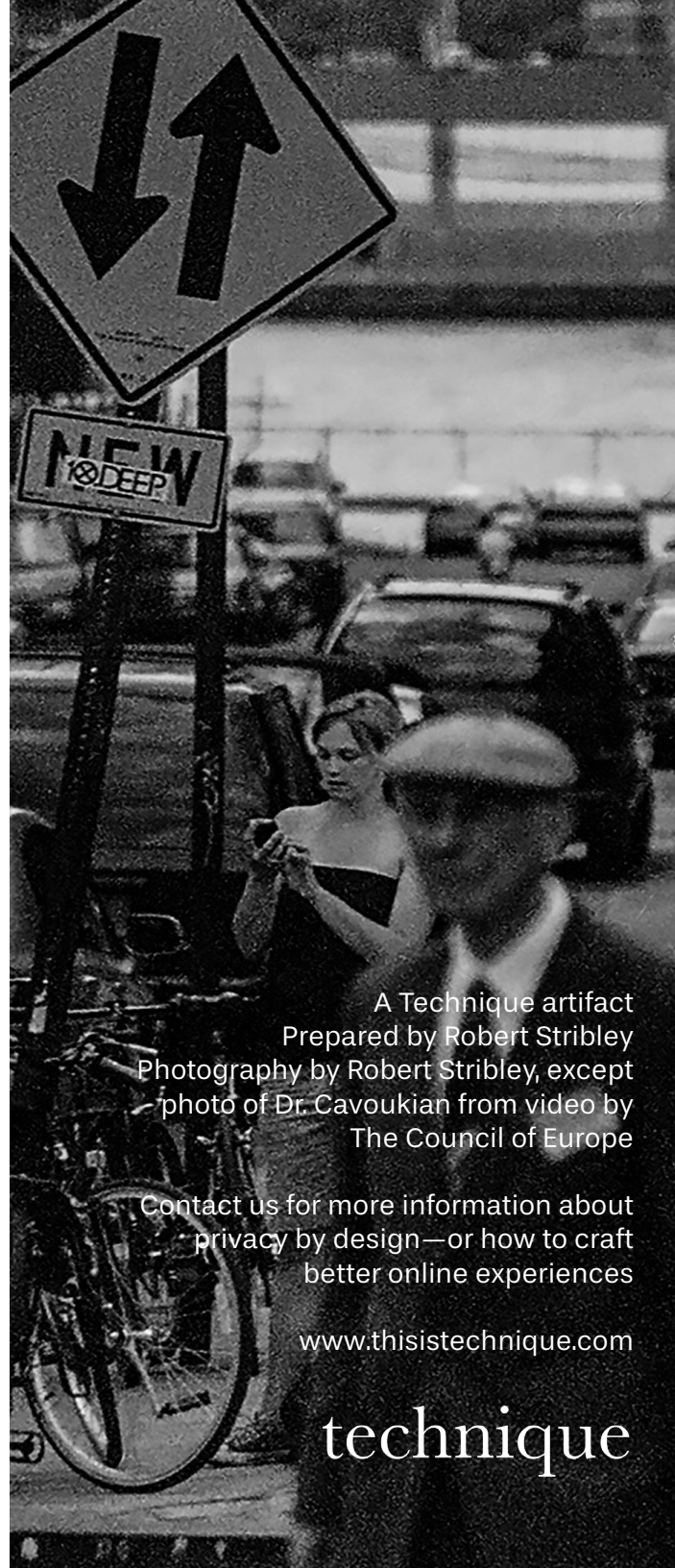
Discussing privacy issues with clients can be sticky. But ignoring privacy issues for short–term benefits can lead to greater long–term costs.

To remind your clients that respecting the privacy of their customers is important, you can focus on the following themes …

- **Civic responsibility** – Encourage your clients to exercise leadership in respecting users' privacy.
- **Reputation management** – Remind them that their brand can be tarnished if they fail to respect people's privacy.
- **Site abandonment** – Users may leave their site for another if they perceive their privacy is being undermined in the moment.
- **Loss of user base** – If the experience is bad enough, they may find customers abandoning their business altogether.
- **Financial impact** – Increasingly, legislation and regulations mean fines for companies, which ignore users' privacy.

Keep these guidelines in mind in order to maintain vigilance against invasive design practices, which attempt to undermine users' privacy.

Good luck!

A Technique artifact
Prepared by Robert Stribley
Photography by Robert Stribley, except photo of Dr. Cavoukian from video by The Council of Europe

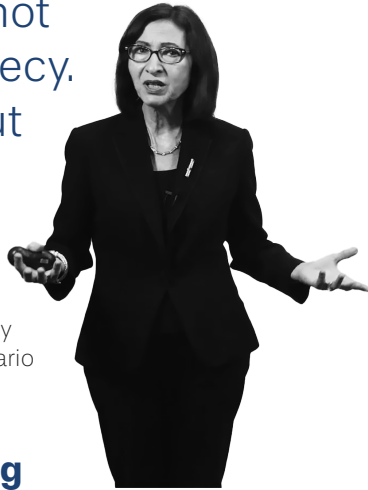Contact us for more information about privacy by design—or how to craft better online experiences

www.thisistechnique.com

technique

DESIGNING FOR PRIVACY IN AN INCREASINGLY PUBLIC WORLD

technique

> "Privacy is not about secrecy. It's all about control."

Dr. Ann Cavoukian, privacy by design leader, former Information and Privacy Commissioner for Ontario

What's the big deal with privacy? I've got nothing to hide!

Privacy isn't about being secretive. It's about maintaining control over your own information.

Sometimes we don't understand the need for privacy until it affect us, personally. As a result of the COVID–19 pandemic, for example, identity theft doubled from 2019 to 2020, making privacy and security issues more relevant than ever.

Even if we're not concerned with privacy issues, we're not designing for ourselves. If we're designing with empathy, we'll consider the needs of people not like ourselves — people with different backgrounds and experiences.

As designers, we're uniquely positioned to take the lead with this issue. But what are some best practices to ensure we're designing with privacy in mind?

Glad you asked! Let's look at seven best practices to keep in mind when we're designing with privacy in mind.

7 Best Practices for Privacy by Design

1 Avoid deceptive patterns

Deceptive patterns trick people into doing things they didn't mean to do—like share their contacts or other personal information. Read up on deceptive patterns and don't allow them into your designs. Harry Brignull's work on deceptive patterns is a great place to start.

2 Be transparent

Be transparent—not only with what data is used and why, but also with who it's given to. People may not realize that a single site shares their data with so many third parties. Personally identifiable information (PII) can be misused for identity theft, so your customers need to feel safe handing it over.

3 Use language with care

Language can be used to obscure privacy issues and to confuse users. Use clear language with marketing copy, as well as legal and privacy policies. The average reading level in the United States, for example, is at about the 8th grade level. If you're not writing to that level, you may be making it difficult for your users to understand important content.

4 Provide tools for protecting data

Give users options to control their personal information. You might even advocate for a Privacy microsite or tool box to highlight these features..

5 Ensure privacy features are discoverable

These features should be easy to find and offered contextually. Privacy information can be highlighted during onboarding and via "just in time" alerts, which appear when you're using an experience in a new way.

California's Opt–Out Icon draws attention to features, which allow consumers to opt out of sharing their personal information with third parties.

6 Remind users of privacy features

Reminding users to review their privacy settings can instill trust with them that a company has their best interests at heart. Offer these reminders proactively, regularly.

7 Never change privacy settings without warning users

Alert users in advance whenever changes need to be made to privacy settings. Avoid making changes, which may endanger users (people!) within at–risk groups.