1st Annual ARF Privacy Study:
What's the Value of Trust and Privacy?

June 2018

Background

The concept of a right to privacy goes back to a time when text messages were written on parchment with quill and ink, and apples only fell from trees. But as our personal data has exploded in the digital age, the notion of privacy has extended to our digital data.

> *"The fact that technology now allows an individual to carry such information in his hand does not make the information any less worthy of the protection for which the Founders fought."*
>
> *—U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts in Riley v. California (2014)[1]*

Yet sharing data has its benefits. In our AdTech/MarTech ecosystem, consumer data helps customize the digital experience. And consumers appreciate this. A recent Accenture survey[2] of 8,000 consumers worldwide demonstrated that 83% of consumers are willing to share their data to enable a personalized experience. But there's a price to publishers. A 2018 multi-country study from Germany-based digital agency SYZYGY[3] found that among US consumers willing to share their personal data, the average price is €130, or about $150.

But is all data the same to all consumers? That's what we set out to learn. We had the following questions:

- What aspects of our digital life are we willing to share and what won't we share?
- Does all data have the same price?
- Do consumers understand the language of a typical digital privacy policy statement?
- Do they place the same level of trust in social media as they do with other media, advertisers, and institutions?

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[1] Downloaded from https://www.aclu.org/issues/privacy-technology, June 21, 2018.
[2] "Making it Personal", Pulse Check 2018, Accenture Interactive, published May, 2018.
[3] "The price of personal data", SYZYGY Digital Insight Study, 2018, published June, 2018

- And do all consumers think alike? For example, are there differences between so-called "digital native" Millennials and their older Baby Boomer counterparts? Does political affiliation influence consumer willingness or trust?

Methodology

The ARF conducted a 10-15-minute mobile-friendly online survey using Qualtrics survey software from June 1-3, 2018. The sample consisted of 1,223 adults age 18 or older across Total US. The sample was balanced on:
- Age
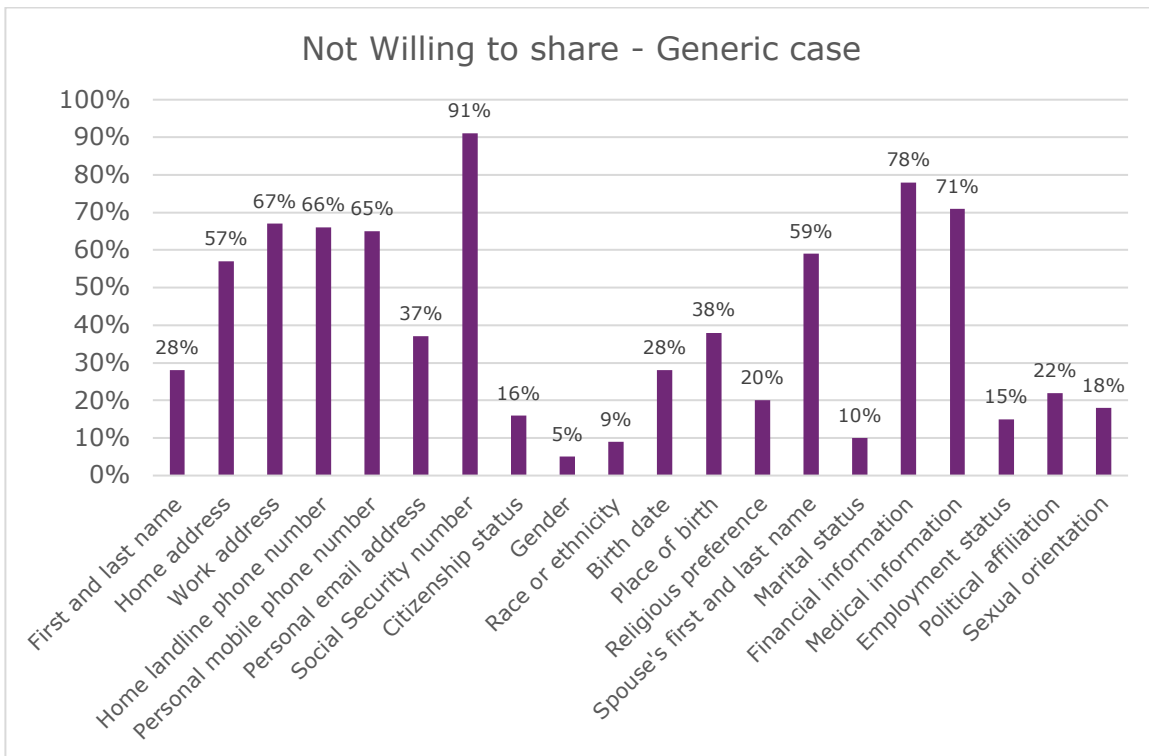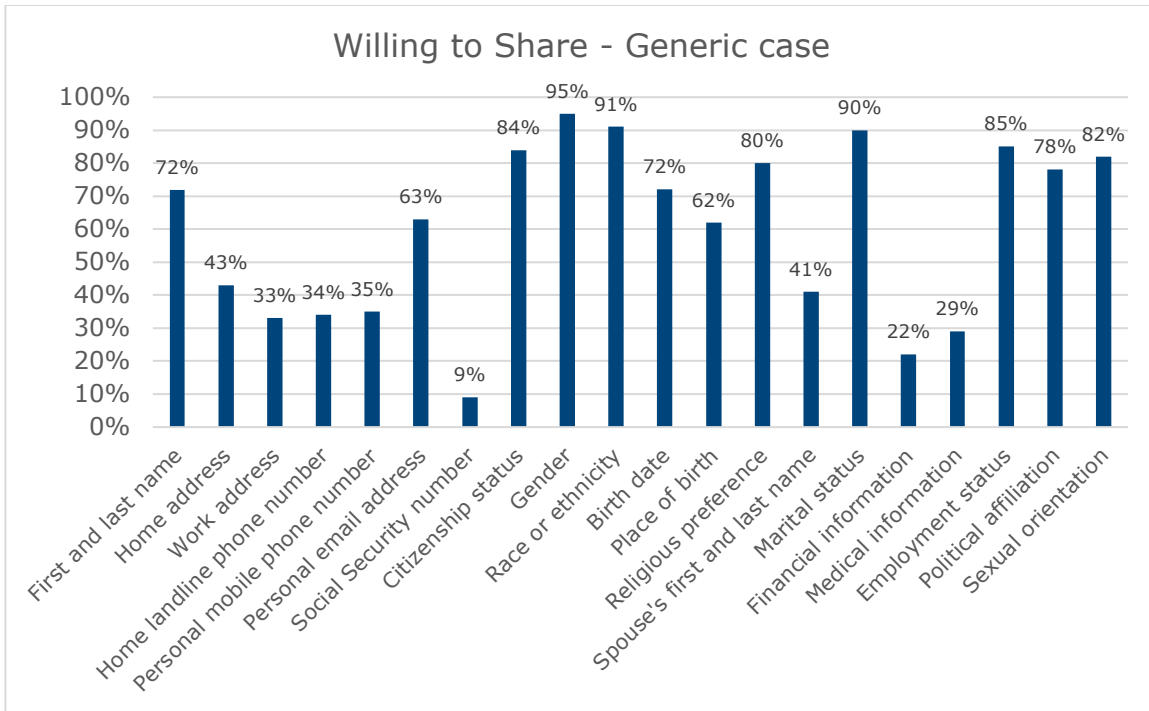- Gender
- Region

The questionnaire asked about:

- The devices consumers used to go online,
- How much time they spent online,
- What activities they do online,
- Which of 20 types of personal data they would or would not share and how much they would want to paid for the data they would share (using a Constant Sum measure to equal $100), in two conditions:
    - A generic condition with no implied or specific benefit
    - A customized condition where the respondent was told that their personal information would allow a website to customize their experience based on their interests or location
- What institutions or groups consumers trust, and
- How clear or confusing is the language in a typical website privacy statement

The questionnaire included a standard set of demographics questions regarding year of birth, gender, state of residence, household income, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, partnership status, education level, and political affiliation.

Findings

People will share data about who they are, but don't want to share info about how to locate or track them

In the generic situation, more than 9 out of 10 consumers are willing to share their gender, race or ethnicity, and marital status with a website. But just one in 10 will share their Social Security number. 22% of people will share financial information and 29% will share medical information. In the broadest sense, consumers are willing to share data that describes who they are but draw the line when it comes to data that could be used to locate or track them.

Willing to Share - Generic case

Information Type	%
First and last name	72%
Home address	43%
Work address	33%
Home landline phone number	34%
Personal mobile phone number	35%
Personal email address	63%
Social Security number	9%
Citizenship status	84%
Gender	95%
Race or ethnicity	91%
Birth date	72%
Place of birth	62%
Religious preference	80%
Spouse's first and last name	41%
Marital status	90%
Financial information	22%
Medical information	29%
Employment status	85%
Political affiliation	78%
Sexual orientation	82%

Not Willing to share - Generic case

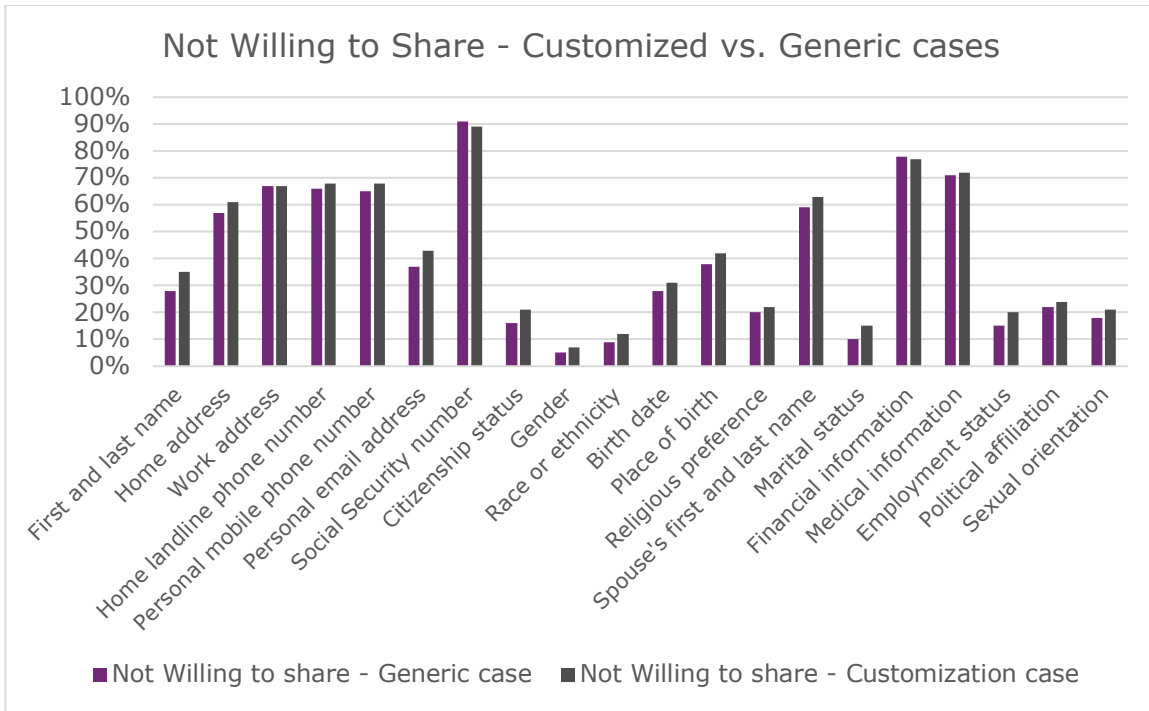| Information Type	%
First and last name	28%
Home address	57%
Work address	67%
Home landline phone number	66%
Personal mobile phone number	65%
Personal email address	37%
Social Security number	91%
Citizenship status	16%
Gender	5%
Race or ethnicity	9%
Birth date	28%
Place of birth	38%
Religious preference	20%
Spouse's first and last name	59%
Marital status	10%
Financial information	78%
Medical information	71%
Employment status	15%
Political affiliation	22%
Sexual orientation	18%

Q3.1 Most websites collect personal information about you and your online activity. Which of the following types of information would you be willing to share with a website and which wouldn't you be willing to share? Please drag and drop each type of information into the appropriate box. (N=1,223)

Offering to customize the online experience doesn't change what data consumers are willing to share

When presented with the benefit that sharing personal data will allow websites to customize their experience – be it news, weather, or advertising tailored to one's location or interests – consumer's choices didn't budge. While some data may have shifted a few percentage points, the pattern of what data people will or will not share remained similar in this customization option.

Q4.1 But most websites collect personal information about you and your online activity so that they can customize your experience with them. They might tailor the news or weather or types of advertising you might see based on where you live or what products you might buy or research. Keeping this in mind, which of the following types of information would you be willing to share with a website and which wouldn't you be willing to share in order for them to customize your online experience? Please drag and drop each type of information into the appropriate box. (N=1,223)

Not Willing to Share - Customized vs. Generic cases

Chart categories (x-axis): First and last name, Home address, Work address, Home landline phone number, Personal mobile phone number, Personal email address, Social Security number, Citizenship status, Gender, Race or ethnicity, Birth date, Place of birth, Religious preference, Spouse's first and last name, Marital status, Financial information, Medical information, Employment status, Political affiliation, Sexual orientation

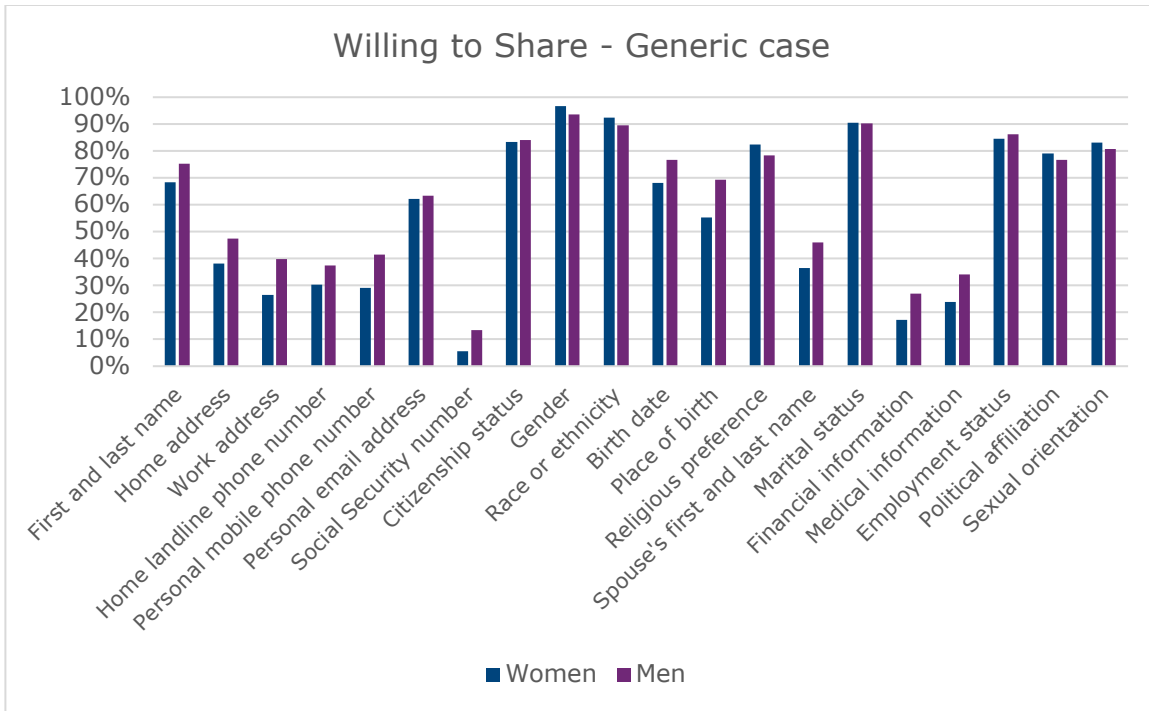Legend: ■ Not Willing to share - Generic case   ■ Not Willing to share - Customization case

Q4.1 But most websites collect personal information about you and your online activity so that they can customize your experience with them. They might tailor the news or weather or types of advertising you might see based on where you live or what products you might buy or research. Keeping this in mind, which of the following types of information would you be willing to share with a website and which wouldn't you be willing to share in order for them to customize your online experience? Please drag and drop each type of information into the appropriate box. (N=1,223)

Men and Millennials are slightly more open to share, but the pattern of what they will or will not share doesn't vary much from Women and Boomers

On a number of factors – addresses, phone numbers, name, even Social Security number – men are a bit more willing to share their data than women are. But that doesn't change the overall message. Both men and women are willing to share data about who they are, but not are less willing to share information about where they are.

A similar pattern holds across generations with some interesting exceptions. Millennials are a tad more likely to share "sensitive" details – Social Security number, Financial or Medical information – than Boomers. However, Boomers are more willing to share where they live or an email address or even political affiliation than their younger cohorts. The differences in financial lifestage may play a role in these differences between generations.

Willing to Share - Generic case (Women vs Men)

Q3.1 Most websites collect personal information about you and your online activity. Which of the following types of information would you be willing to share with a website and which wouldn't you be willing to share? Please drag and drop each type of information into the appropriate box. (Women N=624, Men N=599)

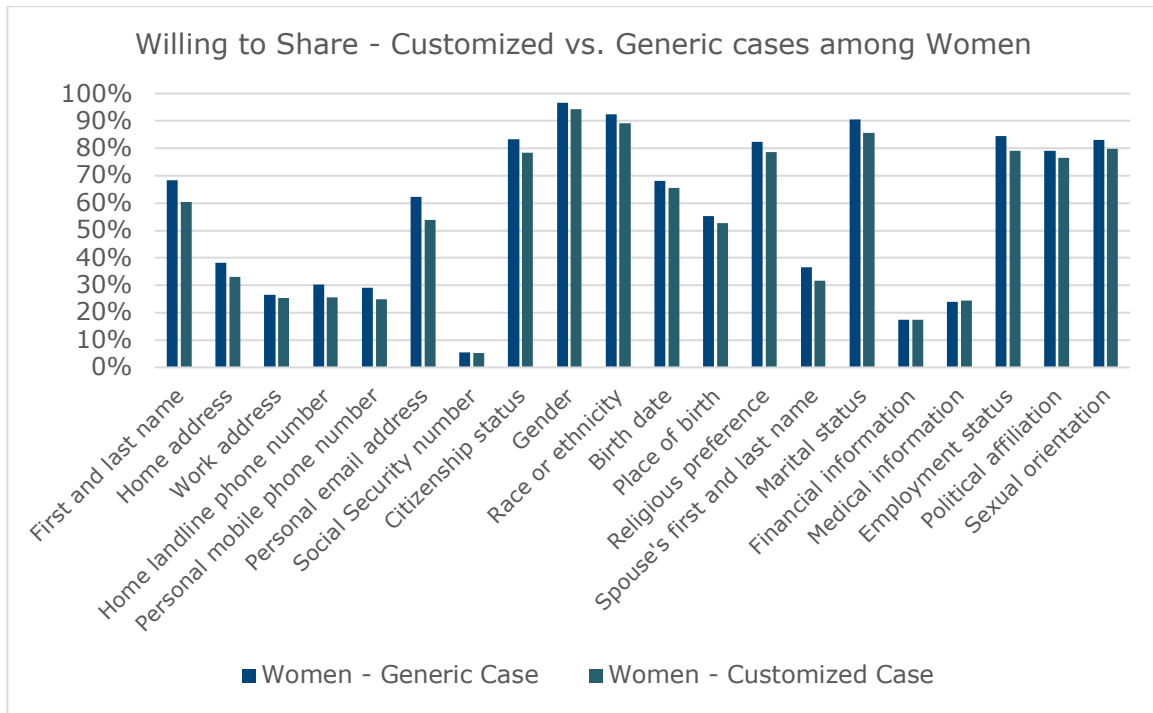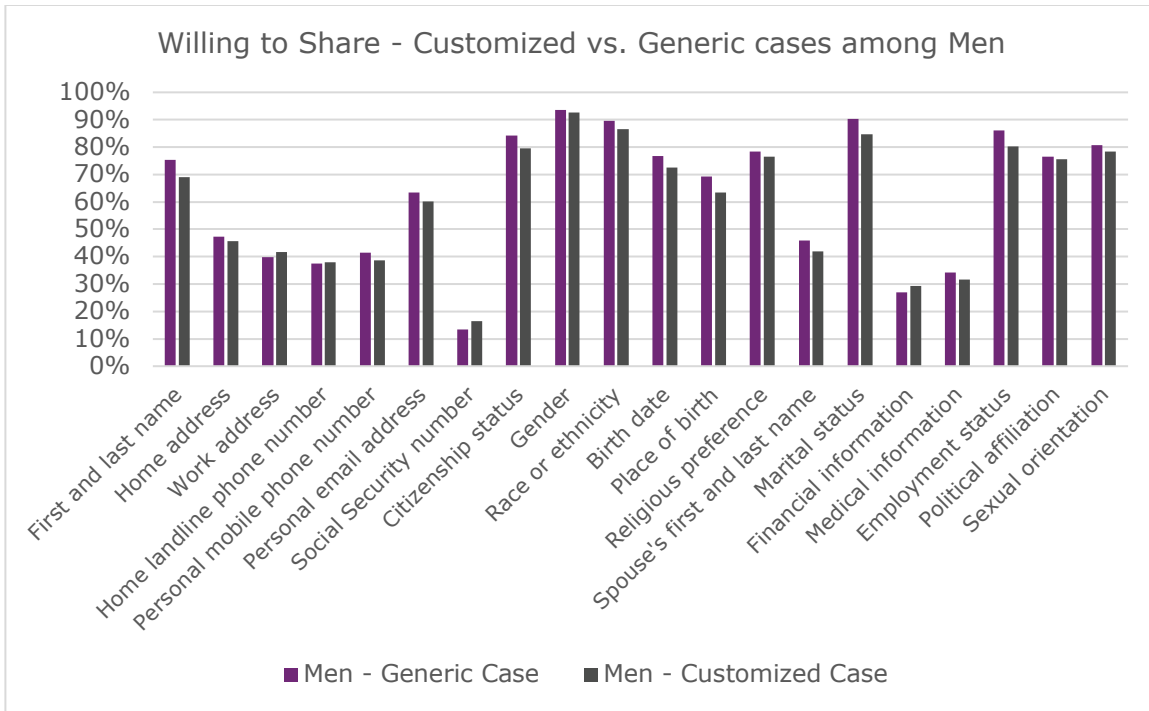**Willing to Share - Generic case** (Millennial, Gen X, Baby Boomer)

Q3.1 Most websites collect personal information about you and your online activity. Which of the following types of information would you be willing to share with a website and which wouldn't you be willing to share? Please drag and drop each type of information into the appropriate box. (Millennial N=366, Gen X N=420, Baby Boomer N=437)

Customization still has no bearing with either gender or generation

Once again, when presented with the benefit of customizing their online experience, there was no significant change in what data people are willing to share. If anything, Baby Boomers may be slightly less receptive to sharing in the customization option. There are slight, but for the most part not statistically significant dips in willingness to share almost all forms of data among Baby Boomers. Taken individually, none would stand out, but collectively, there may be reason to pause.

Q4.1 But most websites collect personal information about you and your online activity so that they can customize your experience with them. They might tailor the news or weather or types of advertising you might see based on where you live or what products you might buy or research. Keeping this in mind, which of the following types of information would you be willing to share with a website and which wouldn't you be willing to share in order for them to customize your online experience? Please drag and drop each type of information into the appropriate box. (Women N=624)

Willing to Share - Customized vs. Generic cases among Men

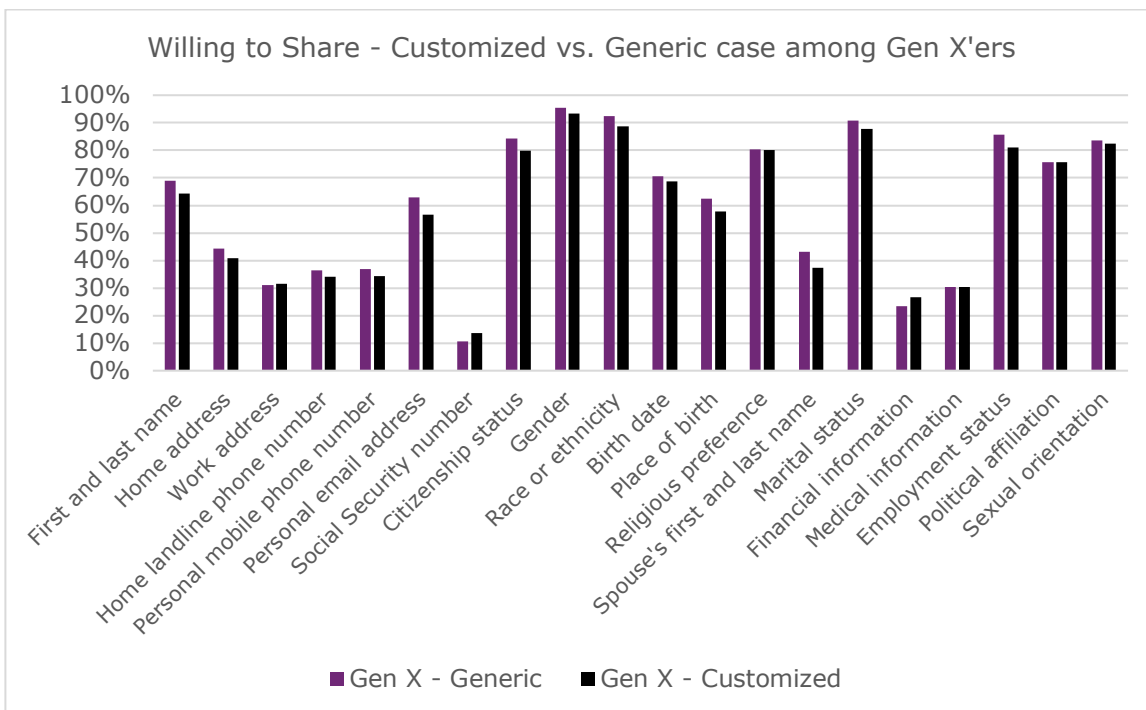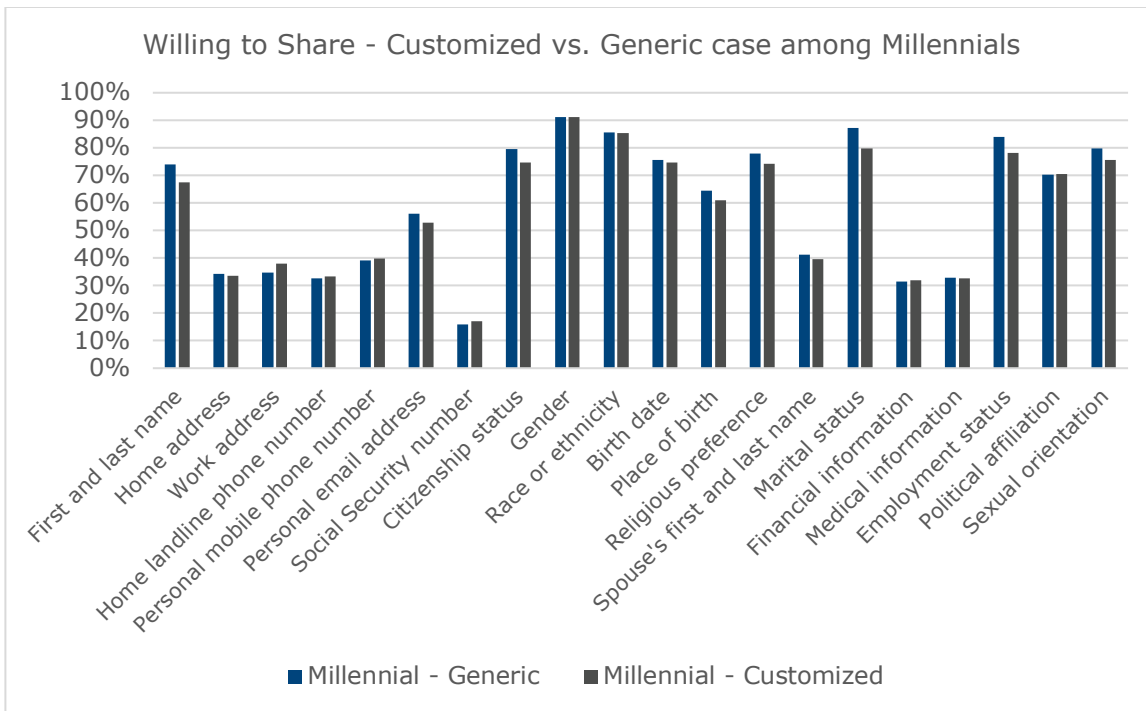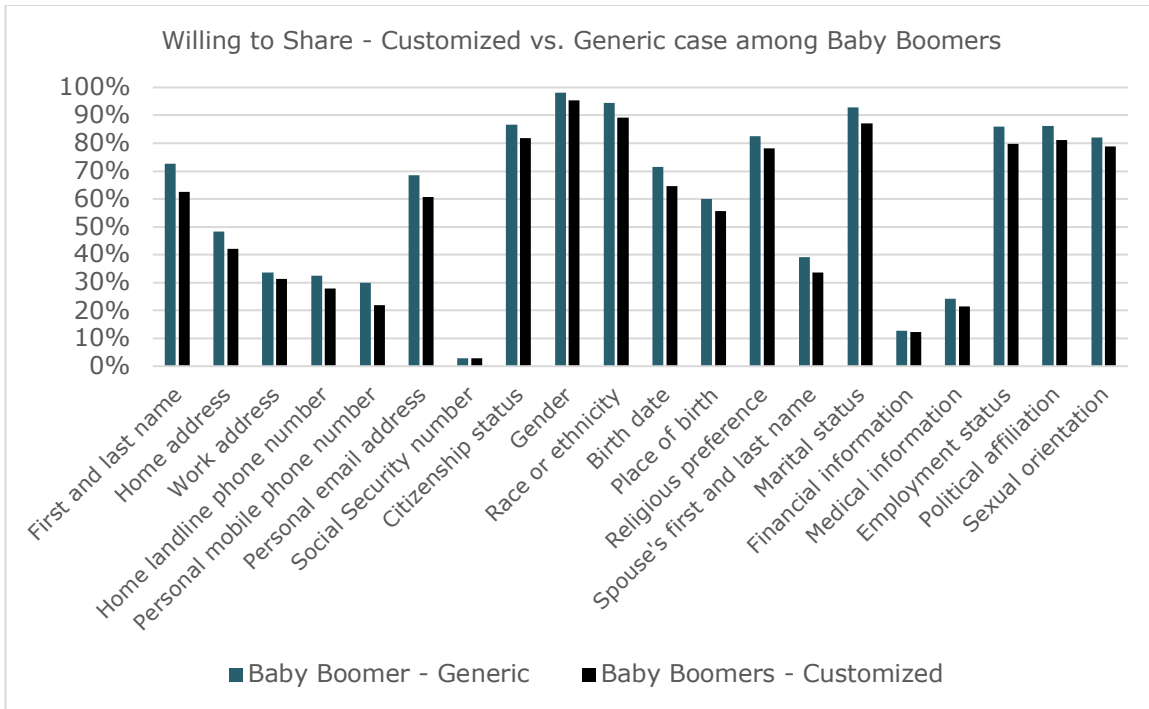Legend: ■ Men - Generic Case ■ Men - Customized Case

Q4.1 But most websites collect personal information about you and your online activity so that they can customize your experience with them. They might tailor the news or weather or types of advertising you might see based on where you live or what products you might buy or research. Keeping this in mind, which of the following types of information would you be willing to share with a website and which wouldn't you be willing to share in order for them to customize your online experience? Please drag and drop each type of information into the appropriate box. (Men N=599)

Willing to Share - Customized vs. Generic case among Millennials

■ Millennial - Generic   ■ Millennial - Customized

Willing to Share - Customized vs. Generic case among Gen X'ers

■ Gen X - Generic   ■ Gen X - Customized

Willing to Share - Customized vs. Generic case among Baby Boomers

(Chart legend: ■ Baby Boomer - Generic   ■ Baby Boomers - Customized)

Q4.1 But most websites collect personal information about you and your online activity so that they can customize your experience with them. They might tailor the news or weather or types of advertising you might see based on where you live or what products you might buy or research. Keeping this in mind, which of the following types of information would you be willing to share with a website and which wouldn't you be willing to share in order for them to customize your online experience? Please drag and drop each type of information into the appropriate box. (Millennial N=366, Gen X N=420, Baby Boomer N=437)

Consumer don't put a high price on the data that they are willing to share

When offered the opportunity to allocate up to $100 for any information they will share with publishers, a majority of consumers will ask for $10 or less for most of that data. And a good portion of consumers are willing to give the data away for free.
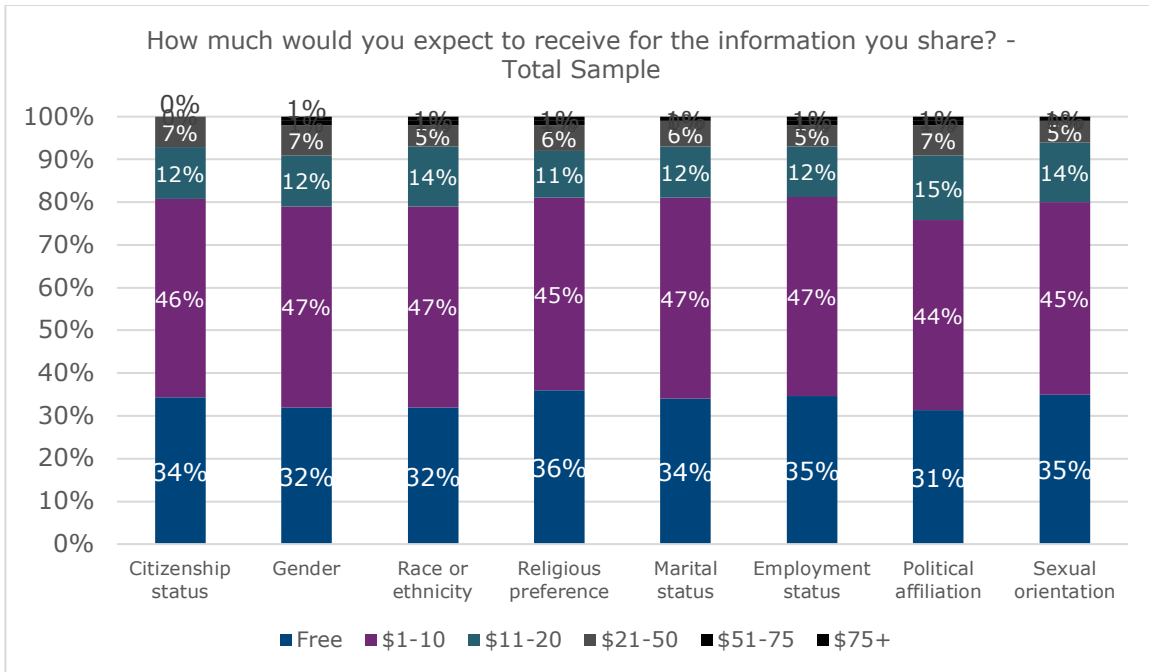
How much would you expect to receive for the information you share? - Total Sample

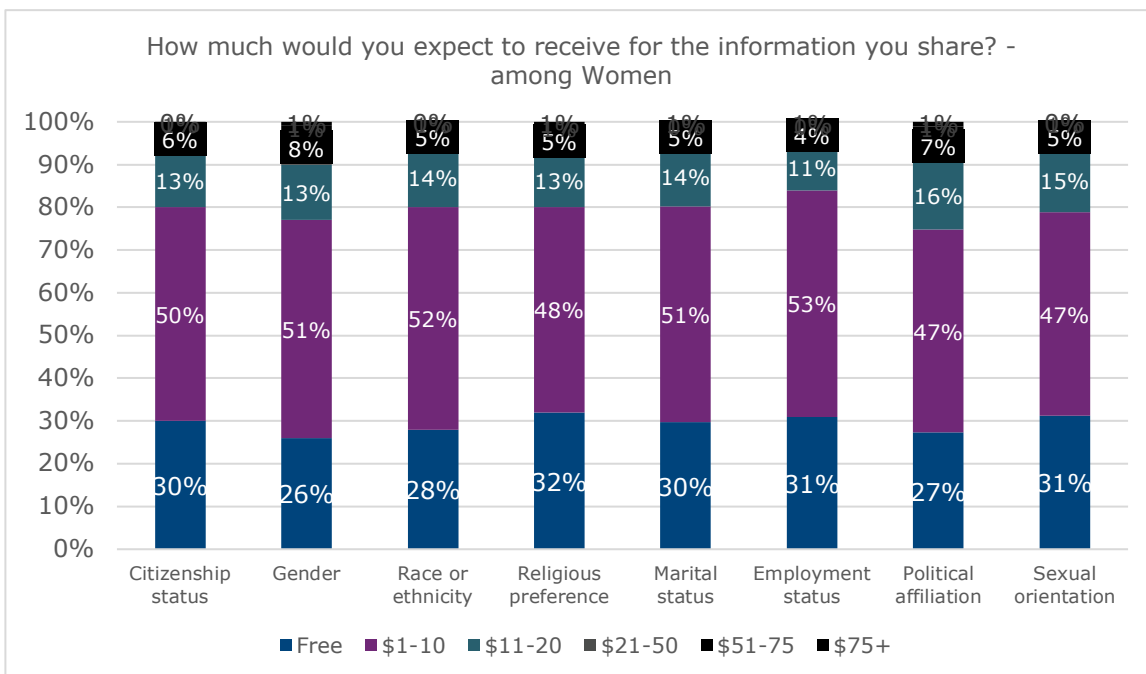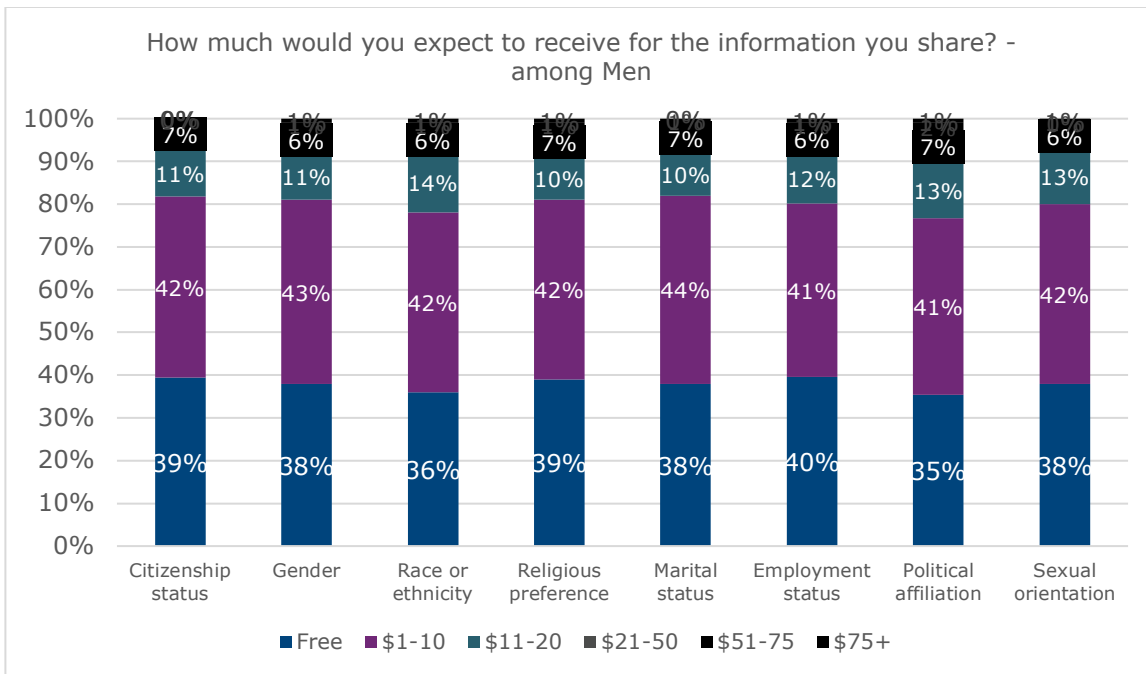|	Citizenship status	Gender	Race or ethnicity	Religious preference	Marital status	Employment status	Political affiliation	Sexual orientation
$75+	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
$21-50	7%	7%	5%	6%	6%	5%	7%	5%
$11-20	12%	12%	14%	11%	12%	12%	15%	14%
$1-10	46%	47%	47%	45%	47%	47%	44%	45%
Free	34%	32%	32%	36%	34%	35%	31%	35%

Legend: ■ Free ■ $1-10 ■ $11-20 ■ $21-50 ■ $51-75 ■ $75+

Q3.2 Let's say that each website was willing to pay you a total of $100 for all the information about you that you said before that you are willing to share. How much would you expect to receive for each individual piece of information about you, so that the total for all your information was $100? Slide the button to the dollar amount you'd expect to receive for that piece of information you would be willing to share. (Variable Sample Size based on # of respondents willing to share individual piece of data)

Two things of note: while still a majority of both men and women ask less than $10 for their data, men are more likely than women to offer their personal information at no cost. A similar pattern is true across generations. Baby Boomers are less likely than both of their younger counterparts to give away their personal data for free. Concerns about security or, on the flipside, a laissez-faire approach to their digital interactions may explain the differences across gender and generation.

How much would you expect to receive for the information you share? - among Men

	Citizenship status	Gender	Race or ethnicity	Religious preference	Marital status	Employment status	Political affiliation	Sexual orientation
$75+	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%
$51-75	7%	6%	6%	7%	7%	6%	7%	6%
$11-20	11%	11%	14%	10%	10%	12%	13%	13%
$1-10	42%	43%	42%	42%	44%	41%	41%	42%
Free	39%	38%	36%	39%	38%	40%	35%	38%

Legend: ■ Free ■ $1-10 ■ $11-20 ■ $21-50 ■ $51-75 ■ $75+

How much would you expect to receive for the information you share? - among Women

	Citizenship status	Gender	Race or ethnicity	Religious preference	Marital status	Employment status	Political affiliation	Sexual orientation
$75+	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%
$51-75	6%	8%	5%	5%	5%	4%	7%	5%
$11-20	13%	13%	14%	13%	14%	11%	16%	15%
$1-10	50%	51%	52%	48%	51%	53%	47%	47%
Free	30%	26%	28%	32%	30%	31%	27%	31%

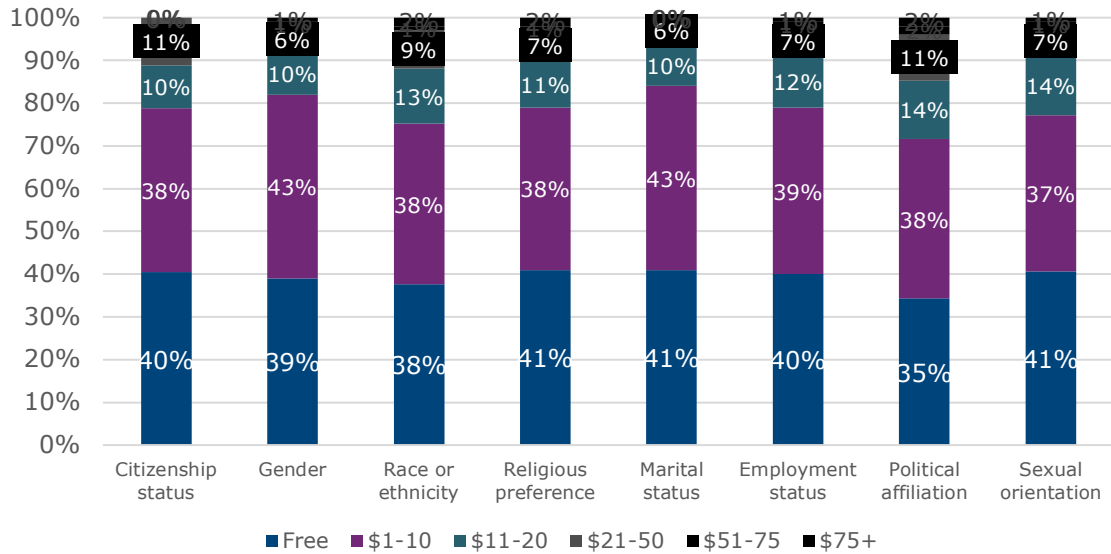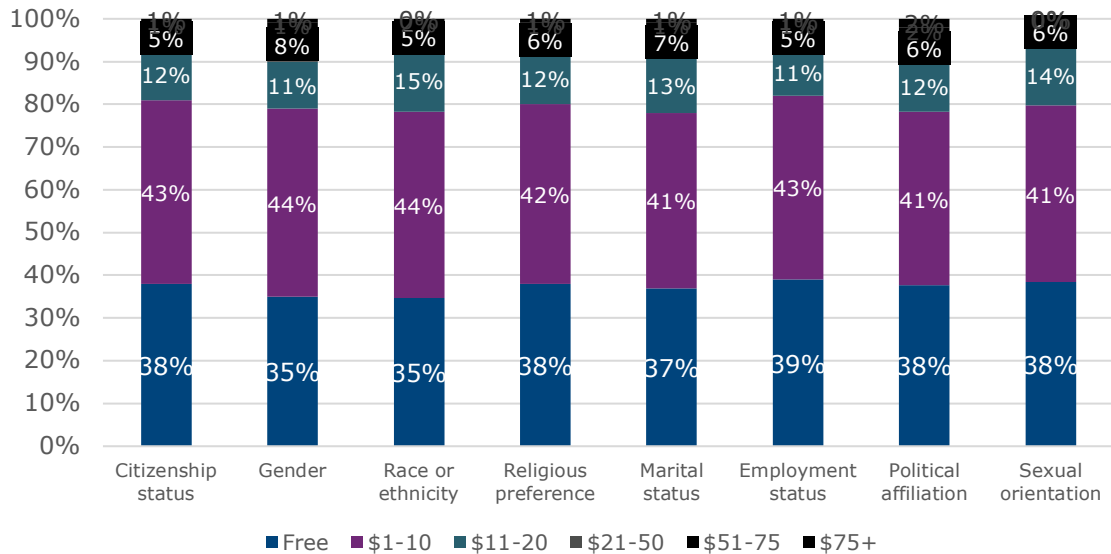Legend: ■ Free ■ $1-10 ■ $11-20 ■ $21-50 ■ $51-75 ■ $75+

Q3.2 Let's say that each website was willing to pay you a total of $100 for all the information about you that you said before that you are willing to share. How much would you expect to receive for each individual piece of information about you, so that the total for all your information was $100? Slide the button to the dollar amount you'd expect to receive for that piece of information you would be willing to share. (Variable Sample Size based on # of respondents willing to share individual piece of data)

How much would you expect to receive for the information you share? - among Millennials

	Citizenship status	Gender	Race or ethnicity	Religious preference	Marital status	Employment status	Political affiliation	Sexual orientation
$75+	0%	1%	2%	2%	0%	1%	2%	1%
$51-75	11%	6%	9%	7%	6%	7%	11%	7%
$11-20	10%	10%	13%	11%	10%	12%	14%	14%
$1-10	38%	43%	38%	38%	43%	39%	38%	37%
Free	40%	39%	38%	41%	41%	40%	35%	41%

Legend: ■ Free ■ $1-10 ■ $11-20 ■ $21-50 ■ $51-75 ■ $75+

How much would you expect to receive for the information you share? - among Gen X'ers
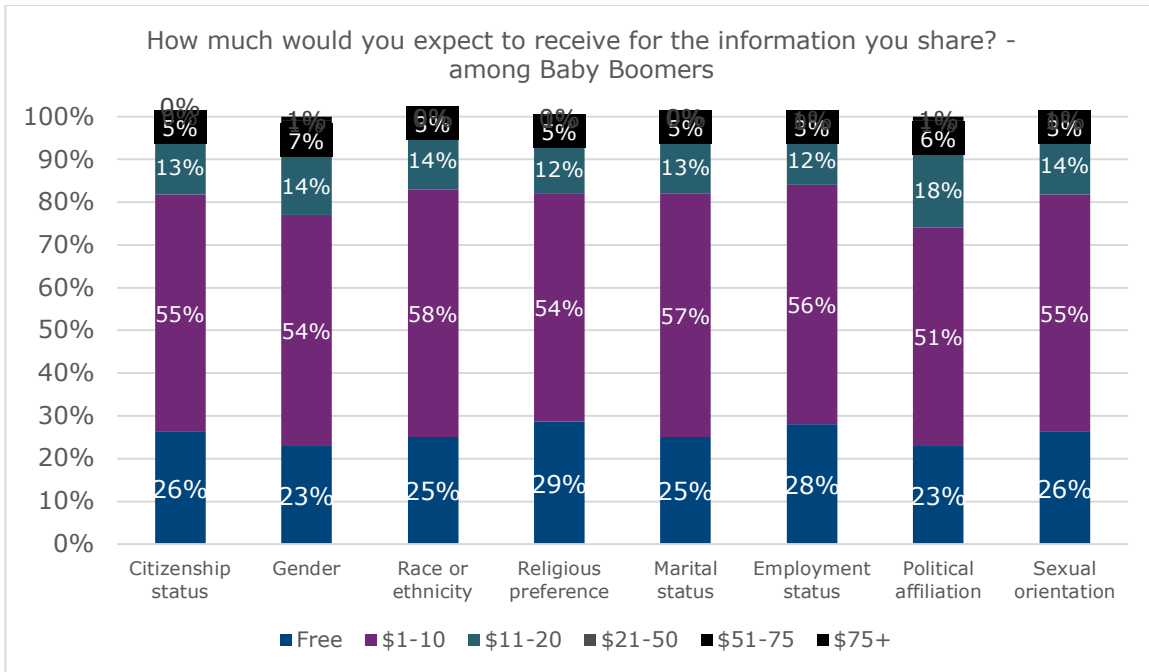
	Citizenship status	Gender	Race or ethnicity	Religious preference	Marital status	Employment status	Political affiliation	Sexual orientation
$75+	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%
$51-75	5%	8%	5%	6%	7%	5%	6%	6%
$11-20	12%	11%	15%	12%	13%	11%	12%	14%
$1-10	43%	44%	44%	42%	41%	43%	41%	41%
Free	38%	35%	35%	38%	37%	39%	38%	38%

Legend: ■ Free ■ $1-10 ■ $11-20 ■ $21-50 ■ $51-75 ■ $75+

How much would you expect to receive for the information you share? - among Baby Boomers

	Citizenship status	Gender	Race or ethnicity	Religious preference	Marital status	Employment status	Political affiliation	Sexual orientation
$75+	0%	1%	3%	2%	0%	3%	1%	3%
$51-75	5%	7%	3%	5%	5%	3%	6%	3%
$11-20	13%	14%	14%	12%	13%	12%	18%	14%
$1-10	55%	54%	58%	54%	57%	56%	51%	55%
Free	26%	23%	25%	29%	25%	28%	23%	26%

Legend: ■ Free ■ $1-10 ■ $11-20 ■ $21-50 ■ $51-75 ■ $75+

Q3.2 Let's say that each website was willing to pay you a total of $100 for all the information about you that you said before that you are willing to share. How much would you expect to receive for each individual piece of information about you, so that the total for all your information was $100? Slide the button to the dollar amount you'd expect to receive for that piece of information you would be willing to share. (Variable Sample Size based on # of respondents willing to share individual piece of data)

People understand the benefits in a typical Privacy Statement, but they don't understand the tools

The typical Privacy Statement on a website details the methods, processes, and sometimes the benefits people might get when they agree to share their personal data. But how well do consumers understand the terms presented to them?

We gave people a simplified Privacy Statement, modelled after statements found on well-known websites. We identified 14 common phrases, and asked people if they found the phrase clear or confusing.

Most people understood the benefits and simple processes involved with data sharing and storage. But the technical terms – pixel tags, application data caches, server logs – confused them.

While there were no significant differences in understanding between men and women, Boomers were a bit more baffled by some statements than Millennials. In particular, Millennials were more comfortable with terms like local storage, browser web storage, server logs, and application data caches. Digital "nativity" among Millennials may mean they are just more familiar with digital terminology.

We use various technologies to collect and store information, including cookies, pixel tags, local storage, such as browser web storage or application data caches, databases, and server logs.

We combine our first party data with third party data to serve you ads that are more interesting to you.

Legend: Clear   Neither clear nor confusing   Confusing

Privacy Statement Clarity among Total Sample

Q5.1 Websites publish their Privacy Policy to let you know what information they collect and how they use it. You may or may not have ever read the Privacy Policy for a website you visit. Please read the sample paragraphs below which are taken from popular websites. You'll notice some phrases are highlighted when you click on them. Please indicate if the highlighted words and phrases are clear or confusing. (Variable Sample Size, range N=357-1,064 per statement)
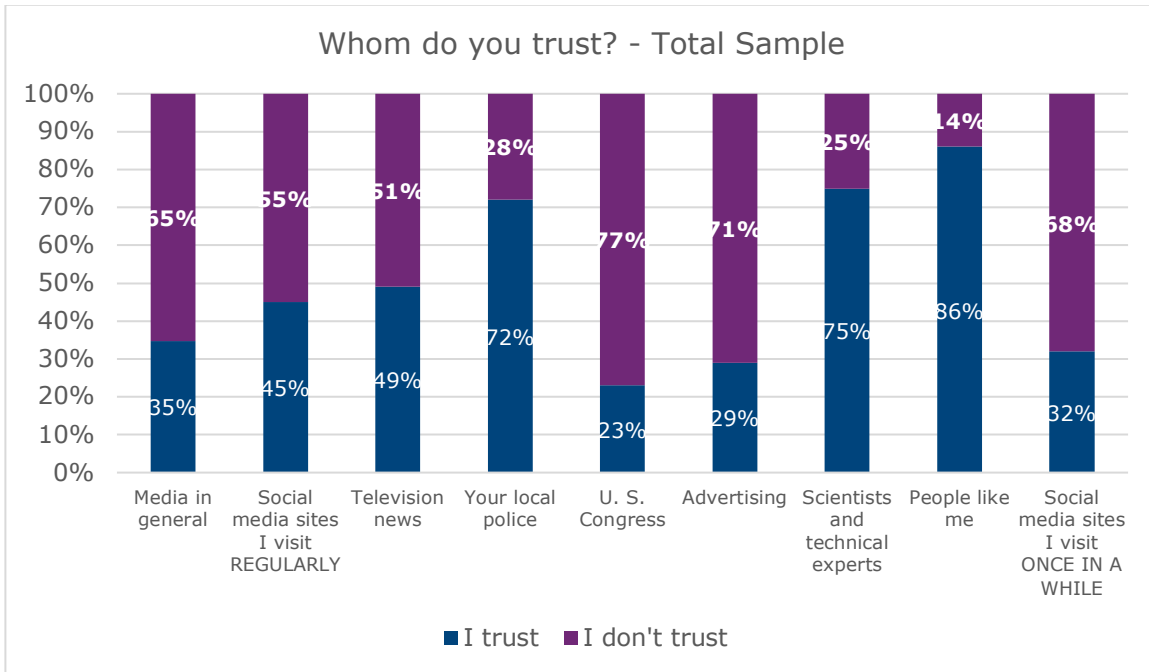
People trust experts and kindred spirits, they don't trust media, advertising, and especially not the Congress

Are people reticent to share their personal data because they don't understand how it will be used, or is it a more fundamental concern about lack of trust? Both may be at play. Consumers trust in Social Media sites – even those they frequent often – may be higher than their trust in advertising, but no greater than their trust in television news. People tend to trust experts and others like them the most, but they trust the US Congress the least. That may be good news for media watchers – a lack of trust in Congress may impede consumer demand to regulate Social Media.
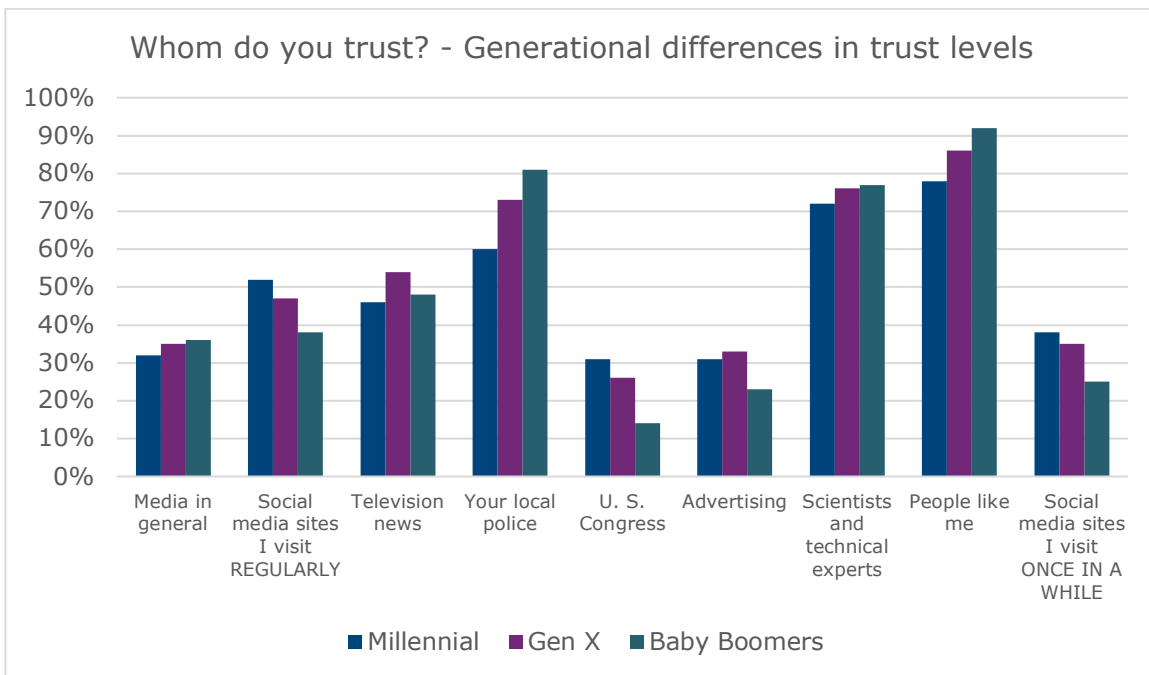
However, trust levels vary along demographic lines more so than data sharing, data value or website privacy communication. For example,

- Millennials claim to trust both Social Media sites and the US Congress more than their Baby Boomer brethren.
- Boomers, on the other hand, trust their local police and people like them more than younger generations.
- Democrats trust media and television news more than Republicans, who have a higher regard for Social Media sites they visit regularly than the general media.
- People of color have more trust in both advertising and the US Congress, but are more leery of their local police than non-people of color.
- The fewest trust differences occur between women and men. They agree on almost every institution with two exceptions: the US Congress and Social

Media sites visited occasionally. Men slightly trust both these institutions more than women.

Whom do you trust? - Total Sample

Category	I trust	I don't trust
Media in general	35%	65%
Social media sites I visit REGULARLY	45%	55%
Television news	49%	51%
Your local police	72%	28%
U. S. Congress	23%	77%
Advertising	29%	71%
Scientists and technical experts	75%	25%
People like me	86%	14%
Social media sites I visit ONCE IN A WHILE	32%	68%

Q6.1 Having your trust is important. Which of the following institutions or people do you trust, or not trust? (N=1,223)

Whom do you trust? - Generational differences in trust levels

| Category	Millennial	Gen X	Baby Boomers
Media in general	32%	35%	36%
Social media sites I visit REGULARLY	52%	47%	38%
Television news	46%	54%	48%
Your local police	60%	73%	81%
U. S. Congress	31%	26%	14%
Advertising	31%	33%	23%
Scientists and technical experts	72%	76%	77%
People like me	78%	86%	92%
Social media sites I visit ONCE IN A WHILE	38%	35%	25%

Q6.1 Having your trust is important. Which of the following institutions or people do you trust, or not trust? (Millennial N=366, Gen X N=420, Baby Boomer N=437)
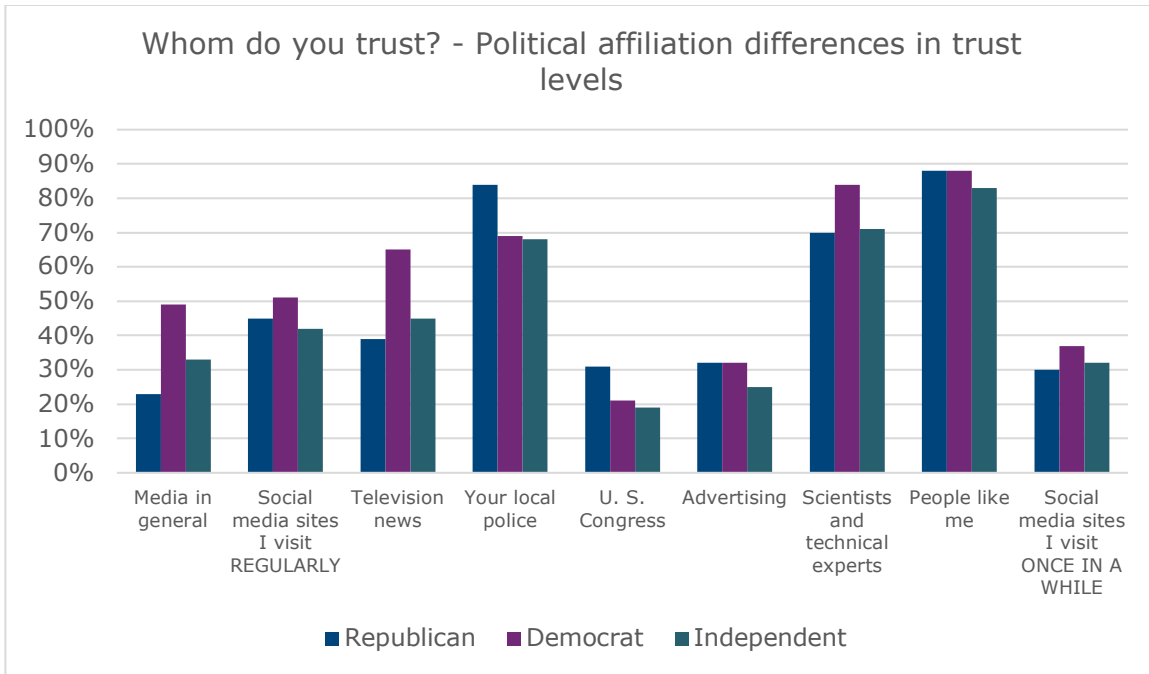
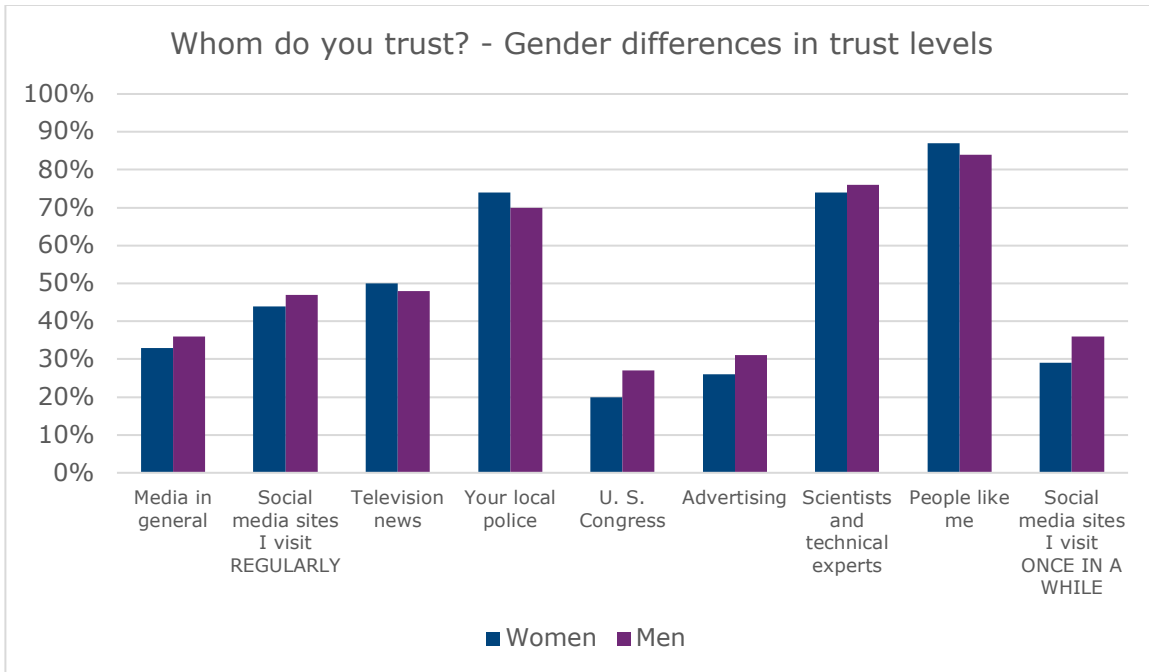**Whom do you trust? - Political affiliation differences in trust levels**

Q6.1 Having your trust is important. Which of the following institutions or people do you trust, or not trust? (Republican N=366, Democrat N=423, Independent N=311)
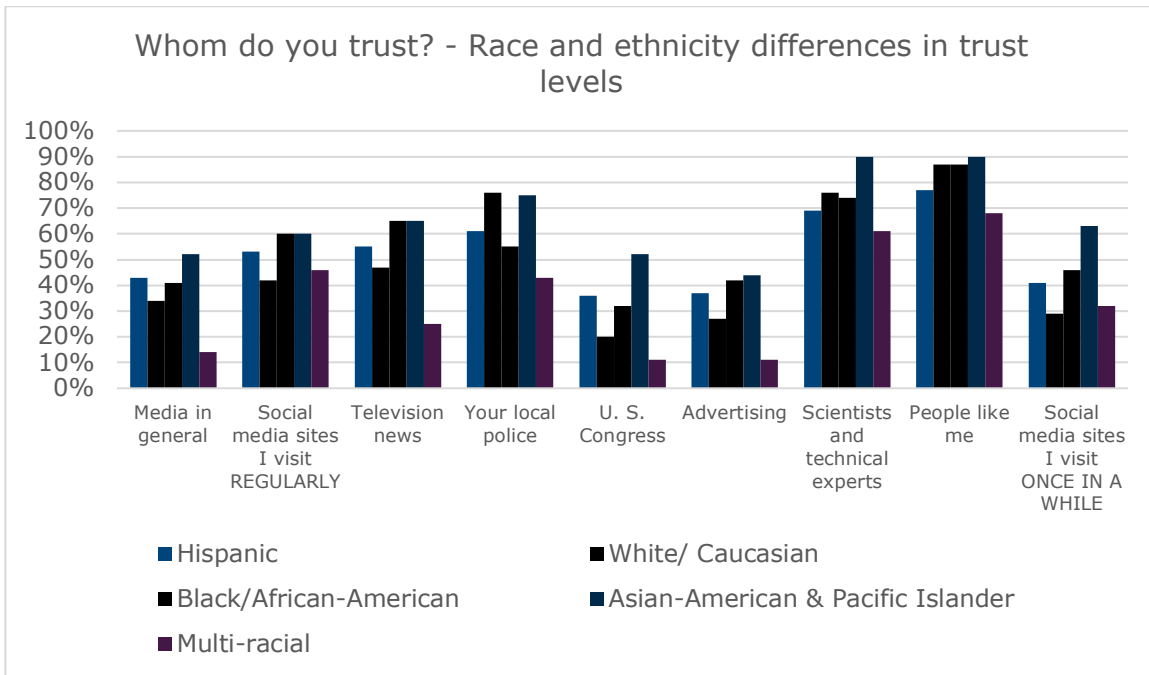
Whom do you trust? - Race and ethnicity differences in trust levels

Q6.1 Having your trust is important. Which of the following institutions or people do you trust, or not trust? (Hispanic N=122, White/Caucasian N=951, Black/African-American N=139, Asian-American & Pacific Islander N=48, Multi-Racial N=28)

Whom do you trust? - Gender differences in trust levels

Q6.1 Having your trust is important. Which of the following institutions or people do you trust, or not trust? (Women N=624, Men N=599)

Implications and Forward Actions

So, do consumers value privacy and the data they share with digital providers? Yes, to a point. They're willing to practically give away information about who they are, but not necessarily how to find them. They understand the potential benefits of sharing data, but they don't understand the process of how that data is collected, stored, or aggregated. And even though they understand the benefits of customization, they don't place significant value on it, at least not enough to change what information they're willing to share. It could be because consumers in total don't trust the Social Media sites they visit. However, the openness and trust among Millennial "digital natives" suggest that all is not lost for digital publishers. Their willingness to share more often and have greater trust in, and understand the language of, digital publishers give publishers a starting point. Digital media have an opportunity to further simplify the terms and value exchange of privacy and consumer data so that the consumer sees greater benefit, and stewardship, of a customized digital experience.

About the Advertising Research Foundation

Founded more than 80 years ago, the ARF is dedicated to creating, curating, and sharing objective, industry-level advertising research to enable members to make a true impact on their advertising and build marketing leadership within their organizations. It has 400 members from leading brand advertisers, agencies, research firms, and media-tech companies. For more information, please visit www.thearf.org