A Deep Dive into Personalization and Privacy in the Library

What is Personalization?

Personalization is done by the system being used. Content and functionality are delivered to a user based on their “role” and/or their behavior. (1)

How Can the Library Leverage Personalization?

Personalization can be used to help build contextual knowledge of a topic or subject, contributing to improved search behavior and in turn information literacy skills (and usage of the library). (2)

Why is Personalization Important?

Brings greater user experience, controls, and customization to applicable situations.

BUT with Personalization Comes the Need for Privacy

Examples of Personalization as a Consumer

• Product suggestions based on search / purchase history
• Push notifications of favored apps
• Curated playlists based on music you listen to

Examples of Personalization For Library Users

• Personalized dashboards that act as a centralized research hub and include:
  - Project Folders
  - Saved Searches
  - Liked Articles
  - Items Checked-Out
• Push notifications or suggestions of articles that match current search topics
• Configurable settings to receive relevant alerts for the library user

Why is a Privacy-First Approach Important?

A privacy-first approach builds trust with end users and complies with today’s standards (e.g., GDPR). Libraries can be seen and remain a trusted source of information for all.

How Can the Library Leverage Privacy-First Personalization?

Provide user-controlled personalization:

• Enable users to create personalized accounts at their discretion
• Automate the ability for users to delete personal accounts and have their account data forgotten
• Comply with privacy standards and share this message with your users

In EBSCO’s focus groups with community college students, undergraduates, graduate students and faculty across 4 institutions—all groups cited a “centralized workspace” as a stand to support their research workflow.

EBSCO treasures personalization and upholds library values around user privacy and data ethics.

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Sources:
(1)https://www.nngroup.com/articles/customization-personalization/