**5 - Data Privacy**

0:01  
Hi, my name is Rosa Freye and I'm excited to share more about data privacy with a presentation that will help you be a better steward of user privacy when leveraging artificial intelligence at your nonprofit.

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This is the 5th module in our AI and Nonprofit series.

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Over the past quarter of WHO, Bruce and I have led several community conversations at on AI for nonprofits, supported by Microsoft.

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Together, we developed materials providing an overview on AI, overarching principles, how to decide on AI, and exploration of core AI tools, approaches to governance, and this module on privacy.

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We leveraged community learning sessions combined with a comprehensive scan of existing frameworks and also our lived experiences as practitioners and nonprofits to inform the development of these tools.

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We will have board talking points, a complementary policy template, as well as overall frameworks that will help your nonprofit incorporate AI for transformative impact.

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So now let's delve into privacy.

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At the end of this module, you will be able to, one, understand the importance of AI and privacy.

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We'll talk about the intersection of the two, get rooted in definitions of privacy, and understand the stakes of privacy at nonprofits in particular.

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Then we will discuss key principles of AI and data reviewing practices that impact what data is used and collected.

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Finally, we will conclude and share best practices on AI and privacy.

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So let's get started.

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To be sure, any leader that has run a digital marketing campaign online is required to have a privacy policy.

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Our privacy policies can sometimes reside in forms on our websites or in our formal agreements with partners.

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Or you may be a nonprofit that doesn't yet have a privacy policy.

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But what I can tell you as a Co founder of the nonprofit Emily and someone who works with nonprofit leaders, this work has been a reminder that being a steward of privacy isn't just about compliance and administrative requirements.

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It is also at the root of the values we hold dear as nonprofit leaders.

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I'm reminded of this especially as a return to this definition of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, which defines privacy as norms and practices that help to safeguard human autonomy, identity, and dignity.

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And in doing so, this work is about protecting people from intrusion, limiting observation, and giving people the agency they need to decide what they want to share about themselves.

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Throughout this journey and thinking about privacy, we learned so much during our community sessions about what leaders wanted to impart to nonprofits who are beginning to use AI or our midstream.

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And I remember fondly 1 contributor who mentioned we are not selling widgets, we are delivering critical services that people and also nonprofit organizations need.

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So the stakes of the information in the databases of nonprofit organizations can be high.

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You can see here just some of the examples of what a nonprofit might be safeguarding on behalf of the public.

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You also might recall pivotal moments in the history of nonprofit data when it was 1979 and one of your beneficiaries disclosed to a caseworker that they had what is now known as HIV.

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Or you helped an undocumented family apply for benefits and their address was listed in your database.

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So examples abound.

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But even if you don't have any of this data, you still have to do right by your people, your employees, your donors, your volunteers, and more.

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So how do you do that in the age of AI?

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It starts with getting clear about ownership, The Who, as Jeff Smart and Randy St.

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reminds us.

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But I, and I think they do too, would also argue the what is just as important.

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Key responsibilities we see held in nonprofits who are leveraging AI boils down to making sure they are compliant and following regulations when it comes to user privacy.

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I also see individual contributors who are ensuring agreements with partners reflects their values on privacy.

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Then there are tasks related to deciding who has access either manually or programmatically to data.

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And finally, there are functions on teams that make decisions about how privacy will be used to safeguard the use of information in your CRMS or your customer relationship management tools.

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So if you're a larger nonprofit, you may have a chief privacy office, but most commonly you will already see privacy and access guidelines inherent in your internal guidelines for your finances since you're subjected to an annual audit.

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But much smaller organizations may work with the consulting firm to help as they build out more robust partnerships.

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And I think the other thing that I think is so important to remember about privacy is that as you are desiring or striving to build towards a sustainable model, sustainable model.

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If you don't already have 1:00 and you're a smaller organization governing contracts or trying to make yourself more attractive for larger donations, they really can be supported by your work as a privacy steward and getting your infrastructure even more developed in this regard.

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So what principles can support your work in AI?

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So one thing I think it's really important to note that less is more in life and also in system design.

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So strive for anonymity and less PII when possible.

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You want to retain control over training AI models with nonprofit content, especially when it is solely germane to your organization and not to the benefit of your ecosystem.

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Also, always be sure to abide by your existing confidentiality policies.

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And if you don't yet have them, I think really being able to think about how this process can help you design them.

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And then you want to be intentional about seeking consent when you are incorporating user data into systems.

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So while I think all organizations can benefit from the previous principles I just shared, I have a couple things I'd like to call out for organizations that are building technology with AI to consider privacy enhancing technologies.

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So first, let's look at data sparsity, or effectively incomplete data, wherein a lot of data is missing or is set to 0 to signify null.

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We know that data sparsity can sometimes reduce accuracy of privacy techniques.

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So say you run a platform that serves those on feature phones who have limited access to the Internet, and you're trying to make a decision about how to seek consent to your terms of service based on sparse data that you have available.

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Say you have data on feature phone users by leveraging information about their read receipts for text messages, for example.

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That could lead you to choose to seek consent through text messaging when, for literacy reasons, your population might be better off receiving an automated call.

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That's the kind of impact that data sparsity could have on your on your system design.

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Thus, you want to be aware about how data sparsity reduces accuracy of privacy techniques, and also when confronting sparse data and machine learning, you want to be intentional about choosing models that perform better with sparse data, such as an entropy weighted K means algorithm or the Lassen algorithm, which has been highlighted on the Lead School of Business blog as models that perform better with sparse data.

7:59  
Another example I would be remiss in mentioning are the ways you can support privacy as a builder of technology by limiting what you asked for in the 1st place, like the nonprofit and relief that helps people understand their SNAP eligibility and roughly 10 simple questions that take less than 3 minutes to answer.

8:16  
They limit the PII they do ask.

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And when they do ask for something that has PII on that screening tool, it's optional.

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And so that's just another example of how you can approach this.

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So, to enhance privacy, you want to consider these steps, go back to your privacy policies, or leverage this process to create privacy policies that have artificial intelligence in mind.

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What might have been missed in the previous state of the world?

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For example, what new areas would you like to cover as you experiment?

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Then create a section on it.

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Then be sure to look at your agreements with team members, with the appropriate counsel and operations staff and identify what may need to be made more explicit.

9:02  
And then I want to leave you with these five practices to help mitigate risk when building with AI.

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Review permissions as appropriate.

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Employ multi factor authentication as a best practice to reduce the risk of unwanted third parties.

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Minimize what you collect so you don't have to correct.

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Give people the minimum amount of permissions needed and also don't forget to share the weight.

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Divide duties so no one person has too much control over your organization.

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As we build an experiment with AI and explore incredible possibilities, we also have to balance this with upholding responsibilities to the people who are at the center of our mission.

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And while we can't eliminate risk, we can certainly aspire to do the best we can, especially when the autonomy, identity, and dignity of our users are at stake.

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Thank you.