

reCaptcha Problems

There are accessibility, usability and privacy problems with reCaptcha. reCaptcha is the utility which appears on a website to interrupt an online activity to ask the user if they are a robot and then make them take an irritating test involving a series of images.

There are alternatives to reCaptcha for checking that a user is genuine. One of the most common one used by petition sites and by banks for online financial transactions is to send the user an email containing a confirmation link.

a) Accessibility

1. People with visual impairments have problems seeing images. A visual impairment can be

- total blindness
- partial blindness, that is, having some sight, but classed as blind
- colour blindness of one of various forms

2. The audio alternative to image test is not viable because

- not being able to see clearly does not guarantee having good hearing, for example, some people are deaf/blind
- the audio version requires exceptionally sharp hearing to solve
- the button/link for selecting the audio test is not clearly detectable

3. People with impaired motor control will have problems selecting images.

4. People with cognitive problems will have problems identifying the images to select.

b) Usability

1. The image selection instructions and how to apply them are not clear.

2. The images are small, unclear, with poor definition making identifying them a challenge even for people with good vision.

3. Solving a reCaptcha test is an unacceptably time-consuming obstacle.

c) Privacy

reCaptcha uses analysis of a user's internet access and website navigation to determine how likely the user is to be genuine. If the user appears likely to be genuine, the reCaptcha test is not presented. If the analysis fails to identify

anything about the user's online behaviour, they are presented with the robot question and the test. This will be the case if the user has browser settings selected for protecting their privacy.

Google provides the following info about reCAPTCHA

reCAPTCHA protects your website from fraud and abuse without creating friction

<https://www.google.com/recaptcha/about/>

The following article provides more information about reCaptcha.

How does reCAPTCHA work? How it is triggered & bypassed

<https://datadome.co/bot-management-protection/how-does-recaptcha-work/>

Under "Weaknesses of reCAPTCHA" this article states:

"ReCAPTCHA v2 is frustrating and makes the web inaccessible. A reCAPTCHA v2 challenge will stop a user dead in their tracks, often at a crucial point in their customer journey, like when they want to log in, make a purchase, or sign up for your newsletter. The CAPTCHA impact on user experience is not good. On top of that, CAPTCHAs make the web more inaccessible for people with disabilities."

and

"ReCAPTCHA makes it hard to stay GDPR-compliant. The more data reCAPTCHA v3 collects, the better it works, but GDPR and other data privacy frameworks require a legal basis to process data, such as user consent or legitimate interest. Because there are reCAPTCHA alternatives that collect far less data and because reCAPTCHA uses tracking cookies, reCAPTCHA technology is problematic for any company that needs to adhere to a data privacy framework."

The following article and video clarify how Google regularly violates our privacy.

Google to settle \$5bn lawsuit for tracking private activity

The plaintiffs accused the tech giant of tracking the data of millions of users

<https://swentr.site/business/589890-google-lawsuit-privacy-violation/>

Dr Epstein: Internet content is CONTROLLED by TWO Big Brothers | MOATS with George Galloway Ep 277

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMTnkIOVix4>