CASE STUDY
DO NOT TRACK

From April 14 to June 15, 2015, every two weeks, a personalized episode of *Do Not Track* (donottrack-doc.com) addressed a different issue related to web privacy and allowed users to see how their own personal data is being tracked in real-time. In between each of the seven episodes, users could read, listen, and dig deeper into the ideas through additional content. Users were asked questions and received emails in between episodes.

Launch date: April 14, 2015

Funders: Primary funders were public service media organizations. Co-producers: Arte (French and German public broadcaster), Bayerischer Rundfunk (German public broadcaster), National Film Board (Canadian interactive producer). Pre-buyers: AJ+ (USA), Radio-Canada (public Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), RTS (public Swiss broadcaster). The CNC (Centre National du Cinema et de l'image animée) French film fund was also a partner. Tribeca New Media Fund also supported the project.

The team worked closely with funders but did not receive any funding specifically earmarked for evaluation or collaborating with nonprofits. The main funders were public broadcasters and public institutions, so the outreach and distribution of the program was at the core of the production process. Creator Brett Gaylor, coming from the Mozilla Foundation, understands this type of campaign well—it is part of his DNA. The team had weekly telephone conferences with partners where distribution and editorial creation were discussed. Each partner in the different participating countries built media partnerships locally to facilitate public conversation, raise awareness, and increase the visibility of the web series on well- frequented websites. For the last episode, the team discussed how to give more action power to users by redirecting them to NGOs and non-profits that fight to protect personal data and privacy.

Production team:
- Brett Gaylor, Showrunner and Director
- Sandra Rodriguez, Vincent Glad, Zineb Dryef, Richard Gutjahr, Virginie Raisson, Akuphen, Authors and/or Episode Directors
- Jason Staczek, Music
- Margaux Missika, Alexandre Brachet, Gregory Trowbridge, Producers
- Sebastien Brothier, Artistic Direction
- Nicolas Menet, Maxime Quintard, Development
- National Film Board of Canada: Hugues Sweeney, Louis-Richard Tremblay, Marie-Pier Gauthier.
- BR: Christiane Miethge, Sandra Marsch

FESTIVALS AND AWARDS

Festivals/Exhibitions:

- Tribeca Film Festival 2015
- RIDM 2015
- IDFA Doclab 2015
- Canadian Screen Awards 2015
- Filmgate 2016

Awards:

- Sheffield Docfest 2015
- Deutscher Preis 2015
- Prix Gemeaux 2015

- FWA (September 13, 2015)
- DIGI Awards 2015
- AIB 2015
- IDA Awards 2015
- Prix Europa 2015 (special mention)
- Crossmedia preis 2016
- Club de l'Audiovisuel de Paris 2016
- Peabody Award 2015 (web winner)

TARGETS

Engagement goals: The first objective of the project was to open a public debate and raise awareness about what goes on behind closed doors, when data is being used, collected, and stacked. Engaging users meant making them care about the issue—the team was expecting people to become aware of the importance of their privacy, realize the amount of data that is collected and exploited about them,understand how data collection works and advocate for more transparency online.

Target location: The target was worldwide, with a focus on the countries involved in the coproduction and the broadcast: France, Germany, Canada, USA, and Switzerland.

Target audience: The primary audience was people between 16 and 50 years old who use the web, smart phones, and social media on a daily basis. The challenge was to be informative enough to address average web users while also engaging people highly informed about privacy, so that they could become ambassadors of the program. The team was very happy when it received a few emails from older people or very young teenagers offering thanks for explaining the web clearly.

Events that opened up the projects to new user groups: The "Loi renseignement" (surveillance law), authorizing state surveillance against terrorism was being discussed at the Parliament in France. Canada was also in the process of passing the C-51 bill, opening a door for surveillance. This was a few months after Snowden's revelations. As a consequence, Brett Gaylor and different

ambassadors (Richard Gutjhar, Vincent Glad, Sandra Rodriguez) were invited to talk publicly about the project in mainstream media outlets and to write articles in well-followed news sites. Some of the ambassadors were invited not only to talk about *Do Not Track*, but also current events concerning data tracking and Big Data.

USER ENGAGEMENT

Platforms: Online and mobile

Users: 880,000

Social media:
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/donottrackdoc/ (The Facebook page has 4665 "likes." But the project itself—the Do Not Track Platform—doesn't have any, because the team needed to be very careful with the way it tracked users. Thus, it decided to not have a "like" button on Facebook, Twitter or any other social media, as doing so would have allowed these platforms to track users without users' consent.)
- Twitter: twitter.com/donottrackdoc (The Twitter page has 2,208 followers but this number is not relevant, as the team's outreach strategy was to use Twitter and Facebook accounts only to communicate with partners in different countries, so that they could communicate on their usual networks.)

Efforts to reach particular demographic groups: Some initiative on social media from Arte and the NFB allowed them to reach a younger audience (15–18 years old).

CHANGES IN AWARENESS/BEHAVIOR

Goals: The team was mainly aiming at behavioral changes: in the type of services and tools people used online or on their mobiles, in the way they read terms and conditions, in their probability of paying for stuff online, and the importance

they gave to their privacy. The team also wanted to make people stop and ask questions before sharing data with social media platforms and apps, to make them question political representatives and be curious and interested about privacy and data tracking issues, and to encourage activism around privacy protection.

What happened: More than 50,000 people provided their email address to participate fully in the project (i.e. — answer questions, be informed of the release of new episodes, receive articles etc.), allowing the team to question them periodically and track their personal data in order to show them what could be tracked. Communication around the project on social media and comments was generally very positive. A Radio-Canada radio show even invited some of its journalists to discuss what they changed in their personal behavior after going through the seven episodes, spurring more comments, likes, and questions on the need for behavior and attitude changes.

One disappointment was that some users watched only one episode and didn't get information about the other topics. But around 30-40% of the audience was coming back from one episode to the next. The team discussed the possibility of partnering with NGOs for the seventh episode. However, because team members were working with public broadcasters in different countries, finding relevant initiatives in a very short period of time proved too complicated. Moreover, with public broadcasters under strict legal obligations, it was difficult to promote a specific organization. In the end, the team displayed several NGOs at the end of the episode for people to choose.

Evaluation strategy: In between episodes, questions were asked to registered users, and data was compiled (with consent) on registered and non-registered users. These questions were aimed at making users think about their initial habits, uses, fears or carelessness about data tracking and privacy. As the episodes developed, questions

guided users in thinking about the future they wished for privacy in the web economy. The last episode used this data to help users understand the power of their decisions and their personal attitude and behavior change throughout the series. Aside from this strategy, the team observed how people were interacting with the program in festivals or public presentations, as well as the comments and emails they would receive during the conversation.

Press examples:
- *The Guardian*: "Do not Track: an online, interactive documentary about who's watching you" theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/14/brett-gaylor-do-not-track-interactive-documentary-privacy
- Motherboard: "This Surveillance Documentary Creeps You Out With How Much It Knows About You" motherboard.vice.com/read/this-surveillance-documentary-creeps-you-out-with-how-much-it-knows-about-you
- Liberation: "Do Not Track, le business des données personnelles sur Internet" www.liberation.fr/ecrans/2015/04/14/do-not-track-le-vol-des-donnees-personnelles-sur-internet_1240902

Notable social media conversations: On the first few days of the online life of the project, Arte used a "robot" on Twitter to answer any Tweets mentioning certain key words (privacy, cookies, tracking surveillance, etc.) and to make those who were tweeting know about the project. It helped to reach a younger community on social networks in an innovative way (the outreach was around 7% of conversion). During the Tribeca Festival, the NFB organized an "Ask Me Anything" session with Brett Gaylor, live on Periscope.

Notable actions: The team was not able to follow precisely what happened with NGOs. Some of the people interviewed for the project who

are working in associations for privacy (like *the Guardian* project) used the program on social media. The Mozilla Foundation, which had been working on an advocacy campaign around tracking in its SmartOn series, partnered with the team on showing the first episode of *Do Not Track* (mozilla.org/en-US/teach/smarton/tracking).

Events: At the Tribeca Film Festival in New York in April 2015, an exhibit helped raise public awareness of this issue. At Radio-Canada, also in April 2015, a two-hour public gathering was organized in Montreal Studios to talk about the *Do Not Track* webseries, data tracking and Big Data. In various festivals, screenings were organized or computers were accessible to the audience to try it. In France, la Prairie des hackers organized a Cryptoparty at la Bellevilloise (Paris) to teach how to protect data (PGP, encryption etc.) and then showcased the whole program with Q&A.

Event goals: To get journalists, researchers and citizens curious about the project and enhance the conversation.

Event attendees: Between 100–300, on average.

User participation in ongoing development: Users not only shared their personal data, but also co-created the personalized content available to them, allowing for a deeper understanding of the issues. Users were invited to answer questions about their online habits and concerns and could contribute to the blog by commenting on posts and sharing more information.

Other evidence of behavior change: While producing the last episode of the program (which was created using data collected in previous programs), the team asked audience members if *Do Not Track* had affected their online behavior. About 10,000 of registered users responded. The results were positive: 29% said they were more aware of the risks regarding their personal data, 23% took steps to protect their data, less than 4% said they didn't care about privacy, and 45% were already aware of privacy risks before watching the program.

Moreover, the curiosity of some journalists covering the series was piqued enough that Sandra Rodriguez was asked to contribute weekly to a radio show (on the main public broadcaster Radio-Canada) to inform the audience about technology developments and ethical risks.

POLITICAL IMPACT

Political impact: Not reported

INNOVATION

Platform innovation: The team built a custom player to display real-time elements (data, gifs, questions, web pages, etc.) inside the video. The team also built an API to collaborate with other development teams (in Canada) so that it could build an episode and still have access to the database. The technology allowed for personalized storytelling about personalization.

BUILDING CAPACITY

Key strategic partners: These included media and broadcasters, who were primary partners and were really strategic in building audience and outreach. For example, Bayerischer Rundfunk used *Do Not Track* material in several TV shows. A lot of teachers, researchers and universities are reaching out on a regular basis to use *Do Not Track* to explain tracking and privacy to their students. Some events have been organized around privacy technics (PGP, encryption etc.) with hackers, using the program as an introduction (for example at La Bellevilloise, in Paris, La Prairie des hackers). Mozilla has been an important partner in promoting the project worldwide, by using it in its campaign about tracking.