

‘Prefer not to say’: Exploring Disclosure Control Mechanisms Around HIV Status Information in Online Dating Apps^{*}

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Abstract. Disclosure control mechanisms such as ‘Prefer not to say’ options are popular in many online forms and applications. However, little research has been conducted to understand how effective these mechanisms are at providing disclosure control, especially around sensitive information in online social environments. We investigated this around HIV status disclosure in online dating applications used by men who have sex with men. We conducted a mobile phone-based online study, asking participants ($N = 183$) to rate dating profiles with either disclosed or undisclosed HIV status information. We tested three alternative user interfaces for displaying undisclosed information. We found that the design of the interface around undisclosed information had a significant effect on the way profiles were rated. In particular, hiding undisclosed information fields increases the effectiveness of disclosure control mechanisms. We will present our findings in detail and discuss implications of our work on the design of current and future disclosure control mechanisms for HIV status information, and more broadly.

Keywords: privacy · disclosure · online dating · disclosure control · prefer not to say · HIV status

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