

# Permissions & Consent

Food for thought on capabilities, risks, awareness

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*2022 W3C Workshop on Permissions & Consent*



# The session lead at your service

- Security and privacy research/consulting (independent).
- Privacy of ads, tracking, web, web browsers.
- Stealing data via light sensor, etc.
- Some recommendations based on past cases. Designing/assessing privacy.
- Former W3C TAG. Involved in a few groups.
- Regulatory/policy/comms abilities.
- **...but fortunately, today speak about the web and permissions!**

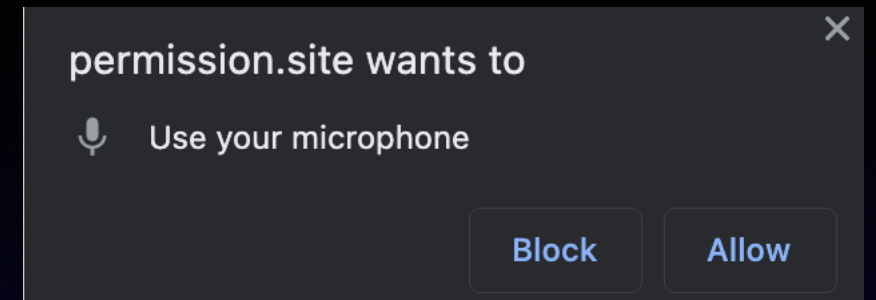
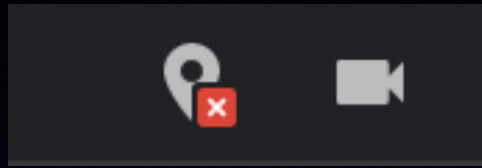


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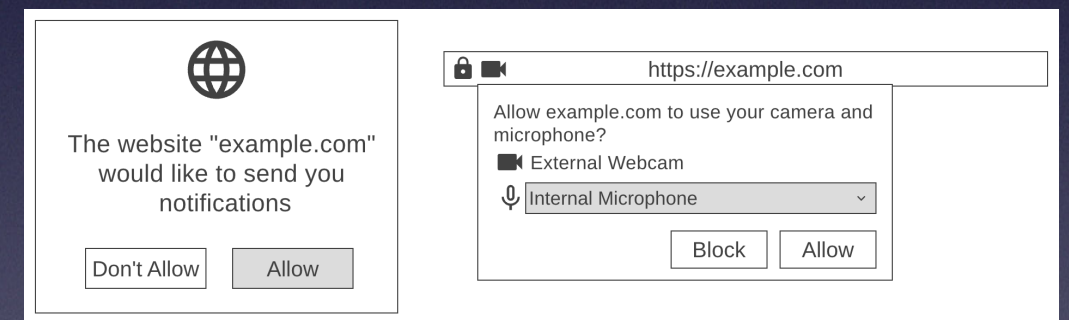
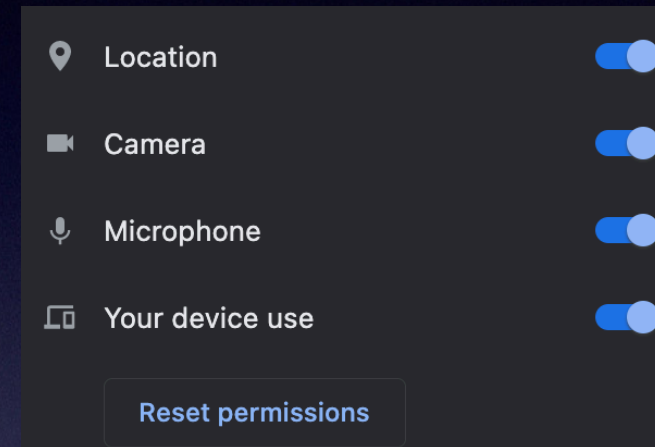
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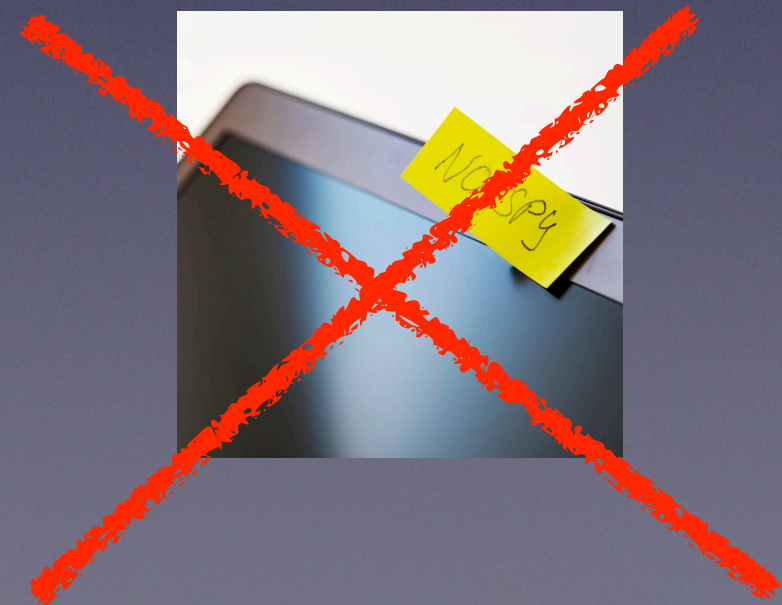
# Standards, user interface, design ...



- Web must be trusted.
- Permissions — key technical web browser mechanism
- Allows access to useful resources.
- Gates sensitive information source.
- Kind of consent



- Not quite in the legal/regulatory term.
- *Curiosity: word "consent" only used twice in the specification.*

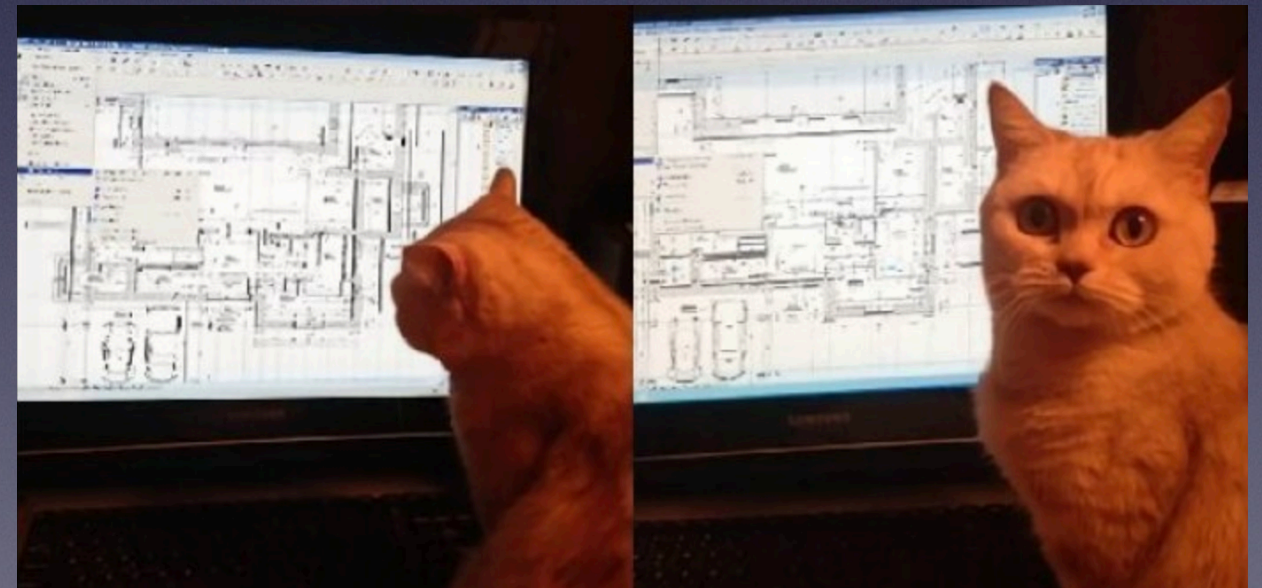
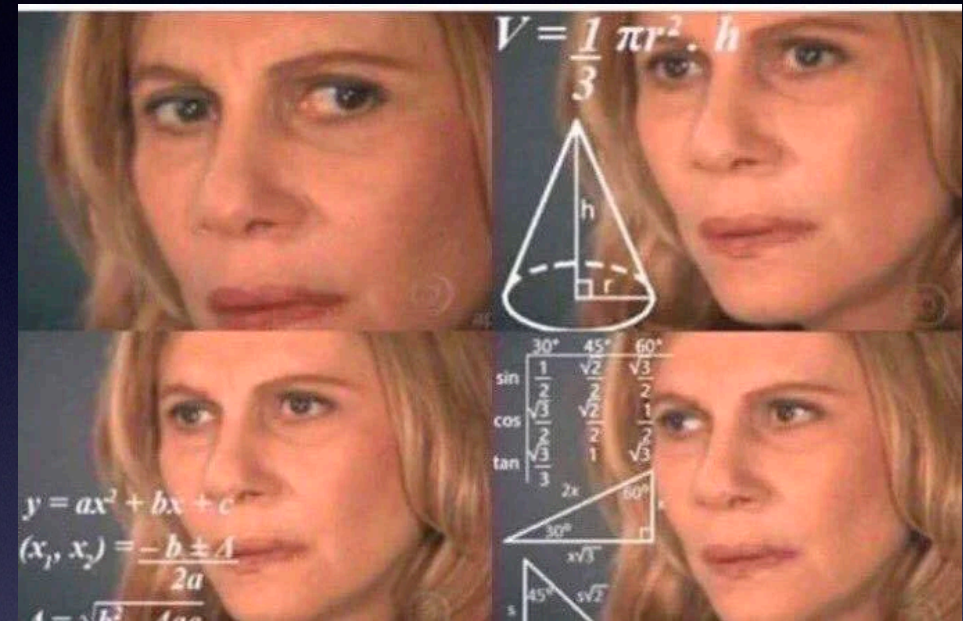




# It must be designed well

“Power to the people”

- Clear messages...
  - *But: UI messages not controlled via website?*
- Simple. *Click, swipe, whatnot?*
- Works on desktop/mobile/whatever
- Sanity. *Minimal distraction.*
- Visibility. Control.
- No surprises.
- Easy to withdraw/stop.





# Not a legal consent mechanism

This consent thing is grounded in...

Moral Theory?

**Nuremberg code** consent: *voluntary, free power of choice, competent, informed, honest, comprehending.*

**GDPR consent:** *freely given, specific/granular, informed, unambiguous, revokable.*

Web Permission process

- Specific (*uses*)? **Yes**. Per-device/source
- Freely given? **Sure**. Prompt.
- Unambiguous? **You bet**. Click needed.
- Easy to withdraw? **Yes**. Just click elsewhere.
- Communication/consequences clear? **Depends**.
- Purpose of processing - typically ~~website usage, but who knows?~~
- Identity of data controller/processor - ~~assumed: a website, but...~~
- ~~Is the clicker a child?~~

- **So: regulations are a complex thing! Web Permission are not a regulatory consent mechanism.**
- **And this is fine!**



# The user must be able to trust their device

For example, be sure that clicking “allow” won’t cause unexpected/undesirable consequences like data leaks or things exploding — unless they really want to!

**How to ensure that users can be certain of the results/impact?**





# That's about it

Now it's your turn

- Permissions — key technical web browser mechanism
- Allows access to useful resources
- Gates sensitive information source
- It's kind of consent — but not in the legal/regulatory term
- And this is fine! Just be aware of it.
- Crucial to understand, and be aware of...
- What permissions is for
- What it is not for
- What is the meaning of “granting a permission”
- What is the meaning/consequence of “rescinding” a permission
- That permission is not an issue of legal consent — for many reasons!
  - It can support consent process, though