AI and Data

Debating digital privacy

COMMUNICATION PROJECT

Activity created by

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The Royal Institution Science Lives Here

Project brief

In this project you will participate in a group debate about the privacy implications and potential benefits of our phone microphones 'listening in', before deciding on whether there should be changes in the law.

Phone microphones can listen to noises and sounds around them, even when you aren't on your phone. As a group, discuss the possible advantages and disadvantages of this technology. Now consider the question: "Should mobile phones be banned from having microphones permanently switched on?" Record what people think: "yes", "no" or "not sure yet".

Working in a group of 4-6 students, divide the character cards between you. Take turns to read out the first section in your card. What do the others in your group think about each character? Next take turns to read out the facts. Does this change any opinions? Now take turns to ask a question to another character in your group. Once the debate is over, vote "yes", "no" or "not sure yet" again. Have opinions changed? Why?

Use the internet to research the issues further.

Find out what the law says about digital privacy and how this might impact smart phone technology. What might happen in the future as new technology becomes available?

Either individually or as a group, decide on where you stand and whether or not there should be a ban or changes to the law to protect privacy. Select the evidence which best supports your position.

Prepare a presentation with your ideas and reasons.

Things to think about

- Who might benefit most from phones which are always listening?
- Who should decide how technology is used in our lives?
- Should there be changes to the law?

Useful resources

- Printed character cards from debate.imascientist.org.uk/privacy-resources
- Access to the internet

Health and safety

To avoid any accidents, make sure you stick to the following health and safety guidelines before getting started:

- find out if any of the materials, equipment or methods are hazardous using science.cleapss.org.uk/Resources/Student-Safety-Sheets/
- assess the risks (think about what could go wrong and how serious it might be);
- decide what you need to do to reduce any risks (such as wearing personal protective equipment, knowing how to deal with emergencies and so on);
- make sure your teacher agrees with your plan and risk assessment.