

Script Video Five: Nora and Alice on handling personal data by citizen scientists

The two friends were enjoying their food and talking data protection.

The citizen science project's instructions were telling Alice how to protect personal data, but not why - so, she asked.

Nora explained that there are 5 main steps covered in the legislation, that any citizen scientists should be mindful of.

Firstly - consent. The owner of the data must naturally allow its use. In most cases there is no explicit owner - like when talking about recording weather events or astronomical phenomena. However, if there are individual people involved their data would require their consent.

Secondly a private data should remain private. Therefore, any citizen scientists should take reasonable precautions - such as password protection - to prevent gathered data to leak to third parties.

Oversight will be the third important issue. Citizen scientists should be careful with any third parties apps (such as chats, mails or document repositories) they communicate or store sensitive data on. Asking the project which apps are advisable to use is the best, Nora added.

The fourth pillar for the EU legislation is access and control of the data owner. Any individual has the right to know who gathers information about him and how it is stored. Also, the individual may request that the personal data is forgotten. In such a case citizen scientists should contact the project.

Lastly, citizen scientists have the obligation to report any breach of personal data they are aware of. If Alice were to have her computer hacked she should tell that to Theodor, as personal data would have been exposed.

Alice thought that this sounded very reasonable. Nora nodded that after all citizen scientists have the same statutory obligations as employees when gathering data is concerned. Which reminded them that they are obliged to take some dessert - the restaurant's most famous menu choice.