

Institution

Emily Carr University
of Art + Design

Principal Researcher

Amber Frid-Jimenez

Research Field

Information and Computing
Technology

Student Involvement

5 student researchers
5 employed students

Partners & Collaborators

Mozilla Foundation

Funding Sources

Mozilla Foundation

Natural Sciences and
Engineering Research Council
(NSERC)

Ford Foundation

Project Location

Worldwide on the internet

Tracking the Trackers

Mozilla Collusion

Collusion is a Firefox Add-On developed by Mozilla that visualizes who is tracking you online. Data tracking is pervasive and is happening without the knowledge or consent of Internet users. In this project, researchers from Emily Carr redesigned and implemented changes to the Collusion Add-On so the complex data becomes visually elegant and easy to comprehend.

The Mozilla Collusion partnership provided an exciting opportunity for students to take on a complex real-world design challenge with a strong public mandate. The students learned about privacy and data and security issues, then used that knowledge and design insights to make the data more compelling and accessible.

The goals of this project were to make it easy for people to make sense of their own browsing data, to expose relationships between websites and third parties -- which normally remain hidden -- and ultimately to give people the tools to make their own decisions about their online privacy. Toward these goals, our researchers adopted three main designs that engage users at various levels of technical knowledge and interest in privacy issues. The first approach engages people with little technical knowledge by giving them a tool to view and explore their own personal Internet browsing history. The second enables those already knowledgeable about privacy issues to find relationships, patterns and trends among trackers and the web sites that enable them. The third lets users act on what they find in the Collusion data in real time. Together these three designs empower users to take control over their own online privacy.

Led by Associate Professor in Design + Dynamic Media Amber Frid-Jimenez, the Mozilla Collusion project involved a team of 5 student researchers over the period of 1 year. The project began in Fall 2012 and will conclude with the public launch of the Add-On to hundreds of thousands of Firefox users in October 2013. One student researcher from Emily Carr was offered permanent employment with Mozilla as a result of their experience with this project.

PACE Research Report

