

AGU DATA PRIVACY VALUES: PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

AGU supports 130,000 enthusiasts to experts worldwide in Earth and space sciences. Through broad and inclusive partnerships, AGU aims to advance discovery and solution science that accelerate knowledge and create solutions that are ethical, unbiased and respectful of communities and their values. Our programs include serving as a [scholarly publisher](#), convening [virtual and in-person events](#) and providing [career support](#). We live our values in everything we do, such as our [net zero energy renovated building](#) in Washington, D.C. and our [Ethics and Equity Center](#), which fosters a diverse and inclusive geoscience community to ensure responsible conduct.

AGU collects data to help facilitate member scientific interactions both inside and outside of AGU to improve the communication and sharing of science across the broad global community, and to better serve and enhance the professional advancement of members at all career stages.

All who are part of AGU— AGU staff, AGU members, AGU volunteers, and AGU third-party contractual organizations—have an obligation and responsibility to respect the privacy rights of individual members. Accordingly, AGU strives to incorporate privacy practices into the design of systems and processes consistent with “privacy by design” principles. This will be realized in our enduring commitment to define, communicate, and put into practice, privacy policies and procedures consistent with the following standards for any information collected¹:

- I. **Notice and Awareness** – AGU provides notice to individuals related to privacy policies and procedures, explaining the purpose for which the personal information² is collected, used, retained and disclosed. The privacy notice is visible, readily accessible, and dated to allow individuals to determine if the notice has changed. **We respect and want to protect your privacy and intellectual property. There is no secret data collection.**

¹ These privacy principles are based on widely used U.S. Federal Trade Commissions' five Fair Information Practices and Principles (FIPP). These principles are (1) Transparency, (2) Choice, (3) Information Review and Correction, (4) Information Protection, and (5) Accountability. The Task Force has reviewed evolving new rules emerging in the European Union related to privacy notices, the concept of consent, data stored in the cloud, and security breach notification. AGU should remain aware of these potentially more stringent requirements.

² Personally identifiable information as used in US privacy law and information security, is information that can be used on its own or with other information to identify, contact, or locate a single person, or to identify an individual in context.

- II. **Choice and Consent** – AGU acknowledges that each individual exercises choice about how visible they wish to be. Therefore, choice is provided to the individual, including which personal information is initially collected and how and under what circumstance this information is provided to third parties. Information is used and retained for specific internal AGU purposes and is not used for other purposes, without appropriate notification or authorization. AGU will strive to keep services as open as possible, and will inform individuals of the limitations of service that may result from their choices. **Users have a choice on whether or not to provide personal information.**
- III. **Clear Usage, Retention and Disposal Practice** – AGU’s use of personal information is limited to the purposes identified in the notice for which the individual has provided implicit or explicit consent. Personal information is collected in a manner that preserves the privacy of the individual and is retained for only as long as necessary to fulfill the stated purposes, or as required by law or regulations. Such information is thereafter appropriately discarded. **Only collect the data needed, only use it as stated.**
- IV. **Access to Information** – Access to information is limited to those directly authorized to have access for those purposes for which it was furnished. AGU will periodically inform individuals about pertinent personal information being held and will provide the individual with means for review and update. AGU will never sell private information to third-party vendors, and will be clear about third-party website or transactional interactions where applicable, and how they are governed. **Individuals have a right to review and correct personal information.**
- V. **Integrity and Security for Privacy/Responsibility and Accountability** – AGU has the responsibility to protect private information, and will provide administrative, technical and physical safeguards of the information, including periodic quality assessments and notification in the event of a security breach. **AGU assumes the responsibility to protect the quality and security of information gathered.**

PRINCIPLES TRANSLATED TO PRACTICE: Recommendations for AGU Staff and AGU Volunteer Leadership for Implementation

1. Responsibility and accountability for privacy policies at AGU are to be assigned to a person or group to develop, document, enforce and monitor compliance. The names of the person or group and their responsibilities will be communicated to all AGU staff. AGU volunteers will be made aware of limitations and privacy issues surrounding access to data.
2. Privacy policies are to be reviewed for consistency with respect to the procedures of laws, regulations and standards in the jurisdictions in which the entity operates. Policies must be reviewed at least annually, and updated as needed. Privacy audits by external firms will be periodically used, including a review of the AGU website policy and disclosures related to use of cookies, beacons and other content delivery aids.

3. Data held should be accurate. AGU should be transparent in communicating the nature and types of data that are being collected, and how the information is utilized. AGU staff should also take all reasonable measures to protect the privacy of the individual member who is providing this data. There should be a process for the correction of inaccuracy and the updating of information, and a data retention policy. Data managers should strive to provide and practice “ethically open data.”³
4. Updated privacy policies will be communicated periodically to staff. Guidelines are to be provided to employees to prevent mishaps. Procedures shall be put in place to address privacy related inquiries and disputes. Clarity, brevity and simplicity should be guiding principles in communicating privacy policies to members; i.e., put things into plain language.
5. The policies of third parties that AGU contracts with shall be reviewed and efforts will be made to align their practices with AGU Principles and Practices. Third-party vendors with whom AGU does business are distinguished from non- contractual third-party entities used by members and others (e.g., Facebook and LinkedIn).
6. A formal breach management program has been implemented. If a member thinks that there has been an infringement of privacy policy, a clear designated contact should be provided: i.e., contact AGUPrivacy@agu.org.
7. AGU makes an effort to stay up to date with new legal and technological developments related to privacy and organizational needs, including intellectual property rights and protection.

³Ethically open data are practices designed to ensure people’s rights to consent, privacy, security and ownership around the information processes of data collection, analysis, storage, presentation and re-use, while also respecting the values of transparency and openness.