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Personal Information Management Systems

A Structured Literature Review

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Motivation

Data-driven business models have become commonplace as firms employ user data to target advertisement, personalise customer experiences, and develop new products and services. Digital platform ecosystems have accelerated this development by enabling companies to collect and combine large volumes of transactional, behavioural, and user-generated data. From a user perspective, this extensive collection and use of personal information raises concerns, for instance about information privacy. This makes it increasingly important for users to control what data they disclose to firms. *Personal Information Management Systems* (PIMS) have recently been proposed as a potential solution. PIMS are a type of information system that enables users to more easily mediate, monitor, and control how their data is accessed and used. However, such systems are referred to by various synonyms in the literature, and the term PIMS has historically been used to denote multiple different, unrelated concepts.

This bachelor's thesis aims to create conceptual clarity by contrasting and differentiating the different synonyms and concepts used in the literature in connection with PIMS. Furthermore, a structured literature review is used to identify the key features that characterise modern PIMS.

Objectives

- Delineate the differing understandings of Personal Information Management Systems
- Identify key characteristics of Personal Information Management Systems with a structured literature review

Literature

Buttarelli, G. (2016, October 20). EDPS Opinion on Personal Information Management Systems. Retrieved July 16, 2026, from https://www.edps.europa.eu/data-protection/our-work/publications/opinions/personal-information-management-systems_en

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Webster, J., & Watson, R. T. (2002). Analyzing the past to prepare for the future: Writing a literature review. *MIS Quarterly*, *26*(2), xiii–xxiii. Retrieved May 9, 2025, from https://www.jstor.org/stable/4132319