

Data security is one of the two funding priorities of the Prototype Fund.

Data security tools help people to **assert their right to informational self-determination**. This refers to the individual's right to determine the disclosure and use of their own personal data.

Personal data is any information that relates to an identified or – and this is particularly important in the digital space – identifiable natural person. Some data requires context, while others, such as a social security number, lead directly to the person in question.

Especially in the virtual space, it is often **difficult for users to assess how much private information they are disclosing**. Very few website or app operators are committed to the credo of “privacy by design”, because data functions as a currency for companies: Users pay with their data to use software and companies can then monetize it. Software users, on the other hand, generally have a legitimate interest in knowing that their data is in safe hands.

One argument that is often used in the context of data protection is that anyone who „has nothing to hide“ should have no issue with sharing personal data. However, the protection of privacy is a personal right under the German constitution. In addition, whether a person has something to hide from a government, for example, is also a question of the political climate. Furthermore, data can be used to create sophisticated user profiles, on the basis of which various content is or is not displayed online. One form of this is the **monetization of user data** in the form of personalized advertising, another is the **potential manipulation of users**, for example in the context of political elections.

The topics of data protection and informational self-determination therefore illustrate particularly well how and for what motives users are involved in software development.