Beyond the Pile of Knobs:

Usability and Design for Privacy, Security, Safety & Consent

Georgia Bullen // @georgiamoon
Executive Director
Simply Secure

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Simply Secure

Everyone deserves technology they can trust.

Simply Secure is a US non-profit organization [501(c)3] dedicated to supporting people working with the most **vulnerable** by designing for **safety and privacy**.

IMAGE CREDIT: Stocksy

How we do it

Design, UX &
Strategy Support

Open Research
& Tools

Building Community
& Convening

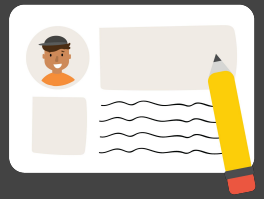
The Challenge

Privacy, security, and safety are **critical**.

Most teams **lack design and UX capacity.**

The challenges teams face are **complex and overwhelming**.

So how can we design for safety?



User needs

Human-centered design — research & testing — is key.

Threats & Risks

How does the technology or product affect someone's safety? Does it introduce new risks?

Your design choices can cause security holes

- Confused people create workarounds
- Preachy or excessive information makes people tune out and/or get annoyed
- People will do what it takes not to think about security

Image: Wikimedia Commons

OK, but how can I start?

The secret sauce: ux design research

Yes, you can do research remotely!

Yes, you can do research in a way that preserves people's agency and privacy!

Image: Lia Siebert

Ask about mental models

“How do you think encrypted messaging works?”

“What do you think a password manager is?”

“Tell me what you think is happening here?”

Image: Molly Wilson

Watch someone use your tool

“What does this do?”

“What do you think it does?”

Understand your users' contexts.

Tools need to work for all of your users in all contexts.

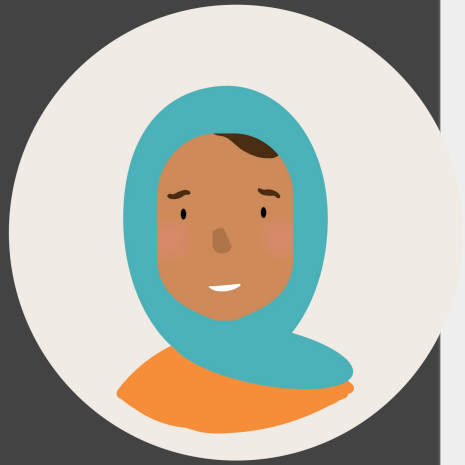
I know I should read the terms and conditions, but I just need to get this done right now.

Age: 32

Occupation: Journalist

Threat/Concern: Leaking my sources and data

*“I need **my sources to know that their information is safe with me and that our communication is private.**”*

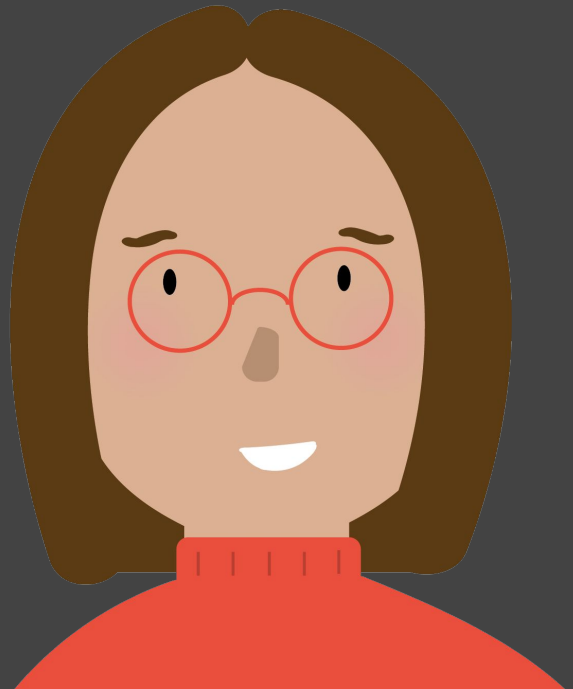


Age: 26

Occupation: Early Career Researcher

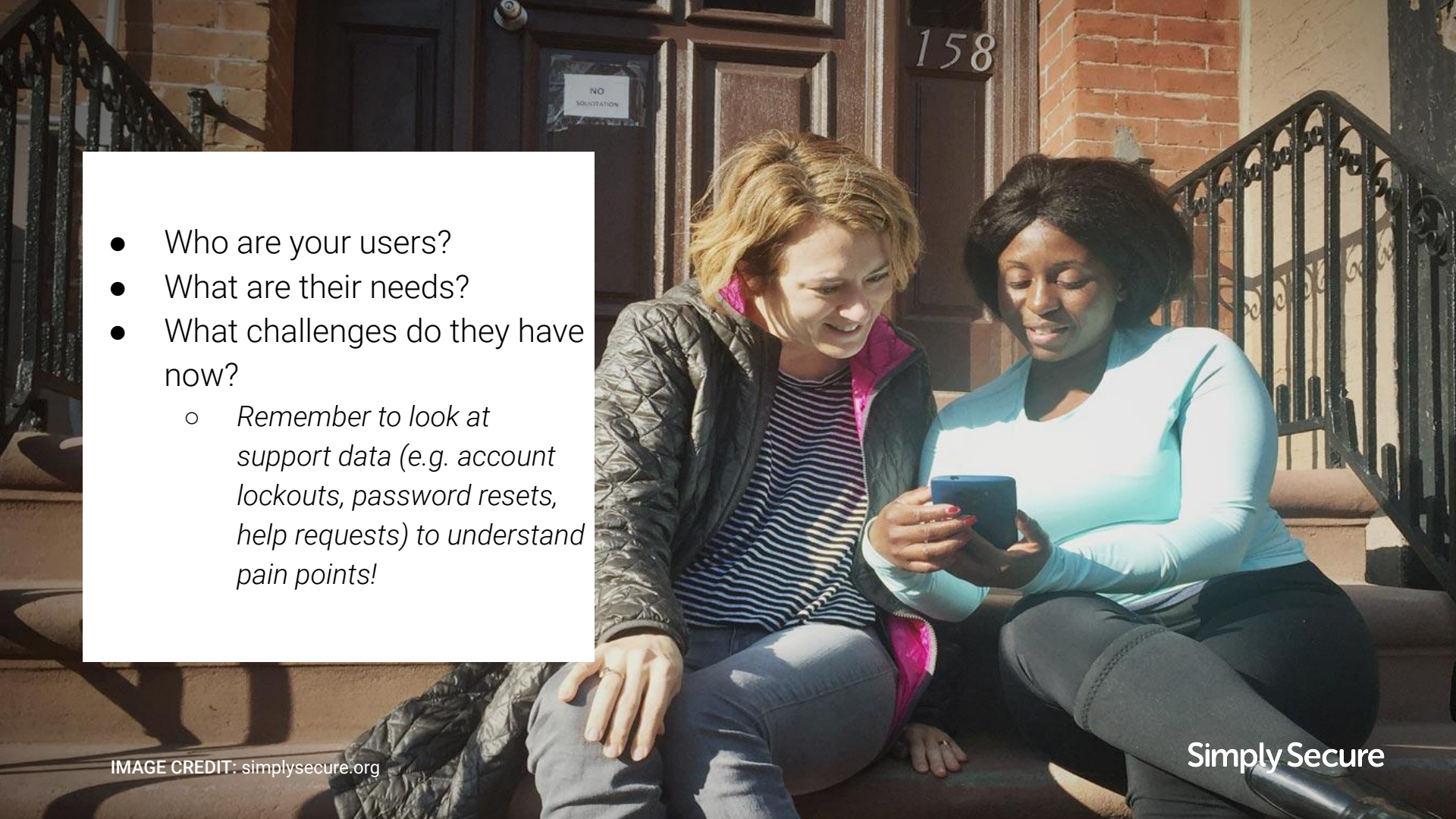
Threat/Concern: Harassment/bullying from other researchers

“It’s great that I have to review the code of conduct every time — it will help myself and others remember how to keep this a safe and constructive community”



User research can help you to develop **personas** and **user journeys** to understand where you need to provide **better controls** and tools.

Don’t just focus on the majority cases, focus on the **high-risk users** and understand their **threats**.



- Who are your users?
- What are their needs?
- What challenges do they have now?
    - *Remember to look at support data (e.g. account lockouts, password resets, help requests) to understand pain points!*

IMAGE CREDIT: simplysecure.org

Simply Secure

Users need transparency and controls to evaluate changes they might need to make.

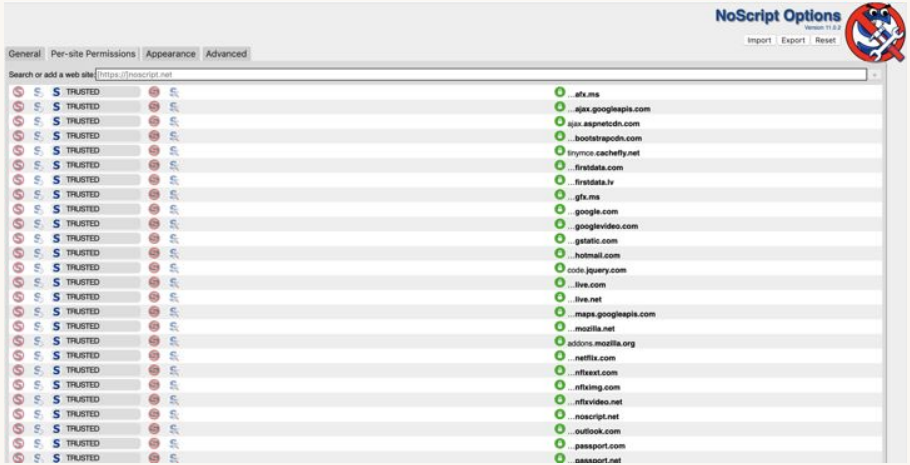
Start with good defaults — allow people to opt in, rather than opt out.

My pseudonym keeps me safe. If I need to change my account name, I know that I can change the setting in my profile.

OK, show me some examples.

NoScript

Redesign coming soon! Read more: https://simplysecure.org/blog/noscript-case-study



NoScript is:

- A tool for power users
- A tool for creating friction, rather than removing it
- Strict by default
- An interactive tool, not a “set and forget” tool

Challenges:

- Too many confusing choices.
- Contradictory terms
- Hard for users to know what settings will protect them

NoScript: Process

- User Interviews
- Created Personas
- Analyzed Ad & Script Blockers
- Analyzed the data
- Created and Iterated on prototypes
- Tested prototypes with users

~~NoScript keeps you safe~~

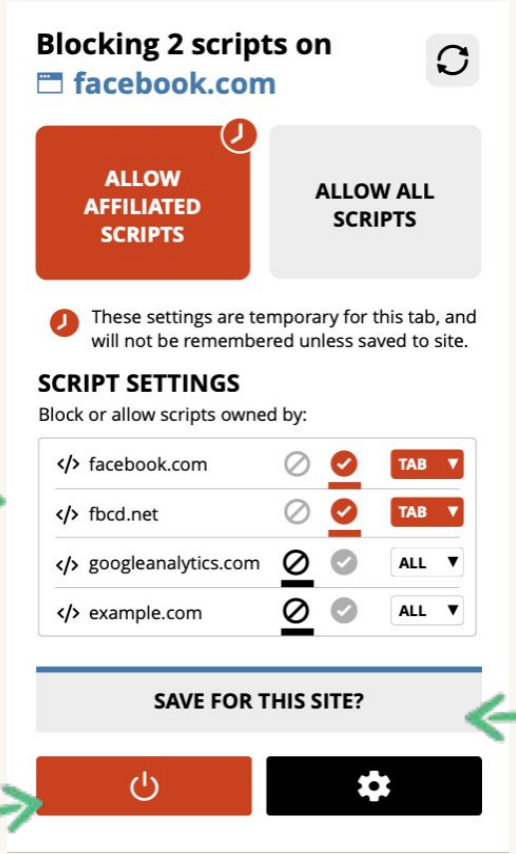
~~NoScript makes safe browsing easy for everyone~~

~~NoScript makes safe browsing~~ easy for power users

NoScript buys power users time to make informed decisions about who they trust

NoScript

Redesign coming soon!



quick&dirty options

fine-tuning

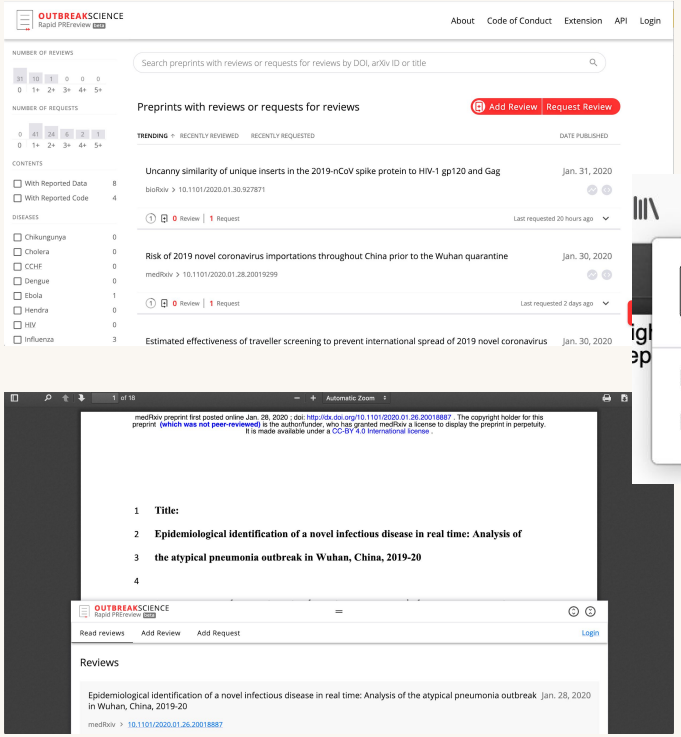
scope configurations

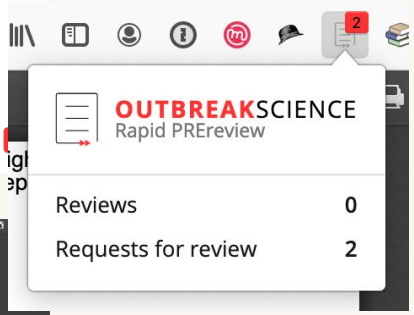
new feature:
per-site settings

“panic button”

PREreview

Check it out: https://prereview.org/ and Rapid PREreview: https://outbreaksci.prereview.org/





PREreview is:

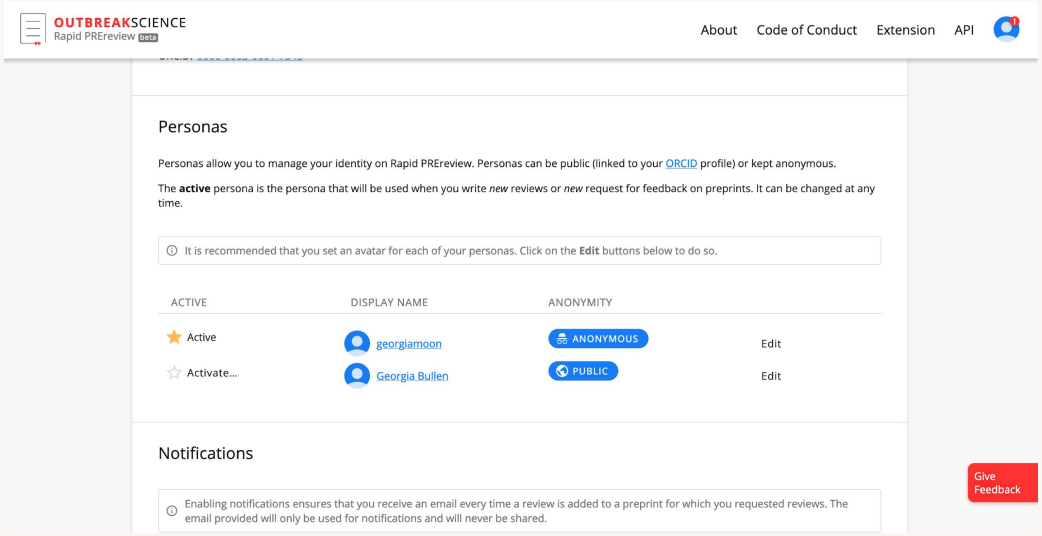
- A platform for crowdsourcing of preprint reviews.
- A tool for cultivating more open feedback in science
- Supporting the development of expertise through open peer review

Challenges:

- Completely new process
- Two Iterations at the moment: Rapid & Regular
- Many researchers are still learning how to work in the open
- Researchers fear retaliation

PREreview: Process

Check it out: https://prereview.org/ and Rapid PREreview: https://outbreaksci.prereview.org/



- User research & interviews to understand the challenges, concerns, interests and current contexts

Interesting Design Ideas

- Repetition of the Code of Conduct on every submission
- Users can have multiple ways (identities or personas) to represent them on the platform — one is pseudonymous
- Admins/Moderators can still moderate their behavior

Current Projects

- Improving the usability of the Python PIP CLI (command line interface)
  Note: Developers are users too!
- Collaborating with Ura Design to improve the admin and whistleblowing interfaces with GlobaLeaks
- Working with funders to improve their workflows for their applications and websites
- Supporting the design of tools for collecting leads around disinformation in communities
- Working with Tor to make their metrics more accessible & useful
- *And more!*

Need help?

Explore our knowledge base: https://simplysecure.org/knowledge-base/

UX Starter Kit: https://simplysecure.org/ux-starter-pack

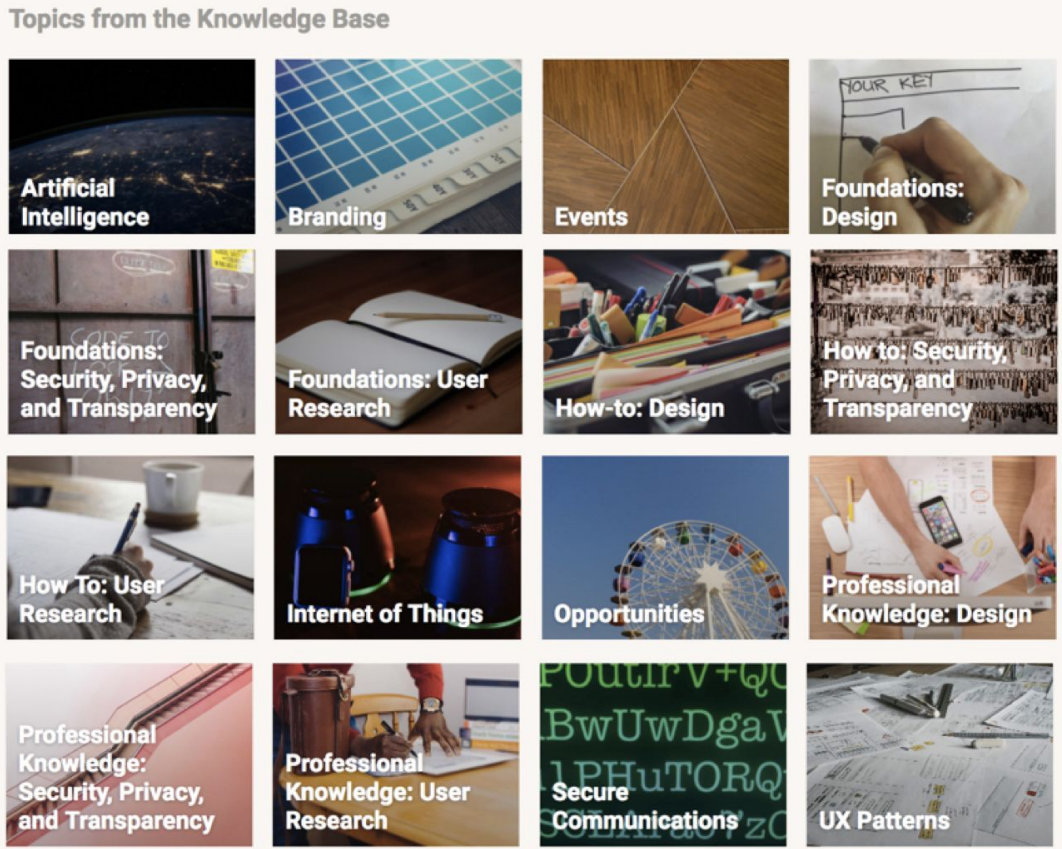


IMAGE CREDIT: Stocksy

Thank you!

If you are interested in being more involved in our community, working with us, or supporting our work — get in touch!

Georgia Bullen

@georgiamoon

georgia [at] simplysecure [dot] org

@simplysecureorg

contact@simplysecure.org

simplysecure.org