

The P3P 1.0 specification is now advancing through the W3C process towards its final state as a W3C recommendation over the next year. The experience of implementers and feedback from businesses, policy makers and users around the world will be critical in shaping the final technology design.

## The P3P Vocabulary

Nine aspects of online privacy are covered by P3P.

Five topics detail the data being tracked by the site. Who is collecting this data? Exactly what information is being collected? For what purposes? Which information is being shared with others? And who are these data recipients?

The remaining four topics explain the site's internal privacy policies. Can users make changes in how their data is used? How are disputes resolved? What is the policy for retaining data? And finally, where can the detailed policies be found in "human readable" form?

## How It Works

P3P enables Web sites to translate their privacy practices into a standardized, machine-readable format (Extensible Markup Language — XML) that can be retrieved automatically and easily interpreted by a user's browser. Translation can be performed manually or with automated tools. Once completed, simple server configurations enable the Web site to automatically inform visitors

that it supports P3P. See <http://www.w3.org/TR/P3P/> for complete technical specifications.

On the user side, P3P clients automatically fetch and read P3P privacy policies on Web sites.

A user's browser equipped for P3P can check a Web site's privacy policy and inform the user of that site's information practices.

The browser could then automatically compare the statement to the privacy preferences of the user, self-regulatory guidelines, or a variety of legal standards from around the world. P3P client software can be built into a Web browser, plug-ins, or other software.

