What is it?

According to research done at Carnegie Mellon, it would take about 76 workdays for the average American to read all the terms/conditions they click “Agree” on every year. This design, T & C, seeks to make users aware of the rights they may be giving up and the policies they mindlessly accept every day by providing a brief AI generated plain-language summary of the most important and/or jarring terms in websites long, jargon-filled terms/conditions documents as soon as users hover over the terms/conditions. More than just providing a quick summary, which users are far more likely to glance over and understand than a full legal document, T & C also provides easy links so that users can choose the amount of detail they want to digest. They can either skim the summary, jump to the summarized points in the original document, or read the full document with a press of a button. Moreover, users can also easily find where to contact the websites about their terms/conditions with a press of a button, generated through AI parsing/searching mechanisms, which can sometimes be a tricky task and one most people do not have time for. While this program could theoretically miss an important term or misinterpret one in summarizing it, it provides multiple fail-safe links to the original document that users may double-check, and, altogether, it encourages people to educate themselves more than just pressing “accept” without reading any terms, as they usually would.

WAY OF LIFE??

LESS TIME READING &
MORE AWARENESS
SURROUNDING POLICIES ON
THE APPS PEOPLE USE
EVERYDAY

MORE TIME USING THE APPS
FOR GOOD
&
LESS TIME/MONEY WASTED ON
LEGAL DISPUTES

Some Considerations and Consequences

Trust is a central pillar of this design, as clients rely on the algorithm not to miss any important terms; this is one of the biggest ethical considerations of the product.

There is the question of how the most “important” terms are decided by the algorithm -- what human/design biases will be present in this algorithmic decision? How will users remedy this with their own personal beliefs?

How will the companies (e.g. Facebook) themselves respond to their terms being summarized by a third party? What are the larger legal implications?

Will a disclaimer in the terms/conditions of T & C be enough to protect the company from backlash? and will this be ironic/unethical to 'hide' this term in the term of T&C whose central goal is transparency?