

The Marriage Pact: Data Principles and Practices

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Introduction

Marriage Pact, *n.* \ˈmer-ij ˈpakt\

An informal agreement between two people — if both parties remain unmarried and without prospects after a certain period of time — to simply marry each other.

Based on your values, the Marriage Pact algorithmically “interviews” all other participants at your school on your behalf to find the best person with whom you could make a marriage pact. The following pages contain our data policy, which describes the information we process to make the Marriage Pact work.

Here, you can find specifics regarding the information we collect (what we collect, how we collect it, and how we use it), how we protect that information, whether or not we share that information (spoiler alert: we don’t), and how you can manage information about you. We also outline how participation is voluntary at all stages of the Marriage Pact and how your privacy is not for sale — and what you can count on when you participate, as a result.

What kinds of information do we collect?

The questionnaire asks about some sensitive things. Here’s why: the idea behind the Template Marriage Pact is to find your best backup plan — that person you could marry if you’re both 30 and still single. When you look at what matters in really long-term relationships (say, 50 years-long), it isn’t icebreaker questions like what music you listen to or what your favorite ice cream flavor is. It’s really about your core values — what you care about deep down. So in order to find that person for you, the Marriage Pact asks about the things that really matter.

But it isn’t all heavy stuff. In the main event, we ask four kinds of questions:

1. Contact Information questions
2. Demographic questions
3. Values questions
4. Meta questions

In your answers, there are four main types of information:

1. Contact information helps us communicate with you — most importantly, to let you know who your match is. It includes just your name and email.
2. Demographic information helps us understand what groups you’re part of in the broader population. This may include information like your stated political affiliation, the languages you speak, or your year in school.
3. Values information helps us understand your approach to life. This will include matters of principle and matters of preference.
4. Finally, meta information has to do with your thoughts on the questions themselves. This information helps us customize your match and make sure your match is best for you by *your* standards — not by someone else’s.

Outside of the main event, we may ask you to answer other kinds of questions:

1. Feedback questions
2. Other questions

In your answers, we'll find the following kinds of information:

1. Feedback information helps us understand why and how you use the Marriage Pact. This might include thoughts and comments on the marriage pact match we gave you, or it could include your feedback on other experiences you have as part of the Marriage Pact.
2. Other information may be volunteered in response to other questions.

We collect pretty minimal information beyond what you volunteer directly in submitted responses to questions. For example, we track things like the time at which you submitted the questionnaire. But we don't get your IP address, we don't use cookies, and your information will never be correlated with information about you from third parties. See the section titled *Your privacy is not for sale* in Principles, below, for more of our perspective on this important topic.

How is this information collected?

This information is all received via official Marriage Pact questionnaires dedicated to Template. Your answers are only recorded when you hit SUBMIT at the end of the form.

Outside the Marriage Pact official questionnaires, we have to keep track of some email data, like if you unsubscribe from the emails. But otherwise, we don't have much interest in data from outside the questionnaire.

You'll be able to identify the Marriage Pact questionnaires for Template because they are clearly marked and associated with the websites www.marriagepact.com, marriagepact.typeform.com, or the emails hello@marriagepact.com or just [\[your-school\]@marriagepact.com](mailto:[your-school]@marriagepact.com).

If anything comes from outside those channels, it's likely not from us. Be careful with fake match emails, and especially be wary of fake requests for your information. If you aren't sure if something is legit, please reach out to us via hello@marriagepact.com.

How is this information used?

We touched on how the information is used when we outlined it above, but we'll expand on how we use your information here:

1. We use contact information in a few ways. First, it's how we communicate with you. Critically, it's also how you'll contact your matches! Subject to balance among participant pools, you will be matched with another participant (ie. a student at Template). When matches are announced, both parties simultaneously receive each other's contact information.

2. We use demographic information to help us understand who's participating in the Marriage Pact. We also use it to let you express if you feel it's critical you marry someone from a certain demographic (eg. they must also be Catholic).
3. We use values information to help us assess your compatibility with potential matches. Sometimes, similarity in values is important. Sometimes, dissimilarity is important. Most often, there are much more complex interactions at play.
4. We use meta information to help us understand your unique preferences about how important different values are. Not everyone cares about the same things; this is how we learn about that. We use this information to refine our model of your unique compatibility with potential matches.
5. We use feedback information to improve the Marriage Pact. By understanding how and why you participate, we can make the Pact better for you and for others.
6. At this point in time, we can't know what questions we'll ask in the future, so we can't know how we might use other information. That said, take a look at the last paragraph in *what kinds of information do you collect?* (above) and the section titled *we do not share this information* (below) for details and for our beliefs, and message us if you have any questions (our contact info is in Closing Words, below).

How is this information protected?

Because there are sensitive questions involved here, privacy is super important — so we've worked hard to design it into the system anywhere and everywhere we can. To start, nobody on the launch team has access to any response data. The matching is also run purely via algorithm, so nobody looks at individual answers to do it (we do get summary statistics to make sure the matching worked). The matching algorithm also uses unique IDs for each person, so it's agnostic as to anyone's name or contact info.

The security of the Marriage Pact as a whole depends on the security of each of our sub-systems. We use Typeform for the questionnaire, which outlines its security and encryption standards [here](#). We use Mailchimp to send emails; they outline their security [here](#). We've set up the algorithm to run on Amazon Web Services, which many other organizations use to house their data; they outline data privacy and security [here](#).

The data itself is protected via both access controls and encryption. Data in transit is encrypted using TLS protocols, and the sensitive data collected via Typeform is encrypted at rest via AES with 256-bit keys. We also do the un-sexy parts of security that are still important, like avoiding public wifi, using long and unique passphrases, and using multi-factor authentication everywhere we can.

We do not share this information.

We will never sell information about you. And beyond sharing contact information with your match, we will never share information about you in a way that could let you be individually identified by it. The "why" here matters, too — take a look at the section called *You are not for sale* in Principles, below, for our views on this topic.

Because your values information and demographic information may be unique to you, we recognize that removing contact information from your responses alone does not qualify as “anonymizing” it. This is why we follow a standard of protecting personal information broadly (rather than the more narrowly-scoped PII).

We may, after the conclusion of the Marriage Pact, aggregate the responses of all participants to share a picture of the community and its values as a whole.

Note: Your name and email (collectively, contact information) is inherently shared when you’re matched with someone.

How can I manage information about me?

If you’d like to change or correct any of the answers you submitted, the best way to do so by re-submitting the complete questionnaire. We’ll confirm you intended to do this and we’ll use the most recent responses when we compute the matching. You’re welcome to do this at any time while the questionnaire is available.

Because we don’t maintain user accounts, at this time we don’t have a way to safely share with you answers you gave us previously. If you think you might be curious about it down the road, we recommend making a copy of your answers before you hit SUBMIT. Because we have no user accounts and no mechanism for you to safely share your answers with you, we also have no mechanism for you to download your answers at this time.

In general, we store information until it’s no longer needed to run the Marriage Pact. Of course, you’re always welcome to opt out of the Marriage Pact, usually by emailing hello@marriagepact.com or by unsubscribing from any one of the emails you’ve received from us. You can also email us at hello@marriagepact.com to have your submission deleted at any time; just use the same email address you used to sign up.

Principles

Participation is voluntary.

Participating in the Marriage Pact is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the remainder of the event at any point over the course of the Marriage Pact. Depending on what stage of the Marriage Pact we’re in, this may look a few different ways.

You may choose to never fill out the questionnaire. Or, you could choose to abandon the questionnaire before hitting SUBMIT and your answers will not be submitted. Your answers will only be recorded if you hit SUBMIT at the end of the form.

After submitting your questionnaire and prior to the matches being computed, you may request to withdraw from the matching by emailing hello@marriagepact.com or by unsubscribing from any one of the emails you’ve received from us.

After the time the matches are computed, you're participating in the Marriage Pact! As detailed in Background, this means another student at Template will be matched with you, and they'll receive your contact information (name and email).

After matches are delivered, you may have the option to learn more about your responses in relation to the aggregated responses of the community. In order to do this, we may ask you to share feedback or answer other questions. Your participation in this portion is optional, and you may choose to not answer any of those questions.

Your privacy is not for sale.

The information you share with us is not for sale. We will never sell information about you.

We're not about advertising, and we're especially not about propaganda, so we won't do advanced population segmenting and we won't sell access to you (or to your attention) to advertisers (state-sponsored or otherwise).

Further, we're about determining marital backup plans — not social credit scores — so your Marriage Pact information will always be self-contained. We won't correlate your responses with information about you from third parties, and we won't give third parties access to Marriage Pact information to correlate with external data about you.

Who We Are

The Marriage Pact was first created in Autumn of 2017 by Liam McGregor and Sophia Sterling-Angus as part of a class project for ECON136: Market Design, at Stanford University. That fall, 53% of everyone at Stanford participated. The next year, 63%. The next, 73%. As of February 2021, a Marriage Pact has now happened at 30 schools, with more than 90,000 people participating and 45,000 matches.

Making the Marriage Pact, we are a small (but growing) team composed almost entirely of full-time students. This year, students are helping bring the Marriage Pact to new schools around the United States. We hope it will be a fun way to create the kind of connection we're all missing right now.

The version of the Marriage Pact dedicated to your school is an independent student initiative. The event is not reviewed or approved by, nor does it necessarily express or reflect the policies or opinions of your university.

Closing Words

We've outlined the data policies above because we think it's the right thing to do. It is our best-faith effort to do the right thing! If you have questions about any of this, you can DM us on Instagram @marriagepact or email us at hello@marriagepact.com.