Google is asking you to “allow” the Collabrify Roadmap Dashboard to

* “See, edit, create, and delete all of your Google Drive files.”

First things first: that sentence was written by Google and Google requires that exact sentence to be displayed. Let me try to explain the underlying rationale for that sentence.

The Collabrify Roadmap Platform, a software platform written by developers at the University of Michigan’s Center for Digital Curricula, needs access to a user’s Google Drive in order to create, save, and edit files that the user works on as the user moves through a “Roadmap” – a digital lesson inside the Collabrify Roadmap Platform. The Google Drive is issued by Google to a user in order for a user to store digital files over a period of time. A user’s Google Drive is private to that user; no other user can “see, edit, create, and delete” a file in that user’s Google Drive – unless permissions are given. In the following scenario, the Collabrify Roadmap Platform needs to “see, edit, create, and delete” a file in a user’s Google Drive.

* In a Roadmap where a user learns about the life-cycle of a butterfly, say, a user, after watching a video, a user may be requested to answer questions posed by the Roadmap about information in the video. Those answers are stored in a file – and that file is then stored in the user’s Google Folder. The user might return to that file and change her/his answers. Or, the user may delete her/his answers.

In order to properly support a user, then, the Collabrify Roadmap Platform must be able to “see, edit, create, and delete” a file in a user’s Google Drive. Indeed, creating, editing and deleting files inside a user’s Google Drive is a core functionality of the Collabrify Roadmap Platform.

Now, since a user’s Google Folder is owned by that user and is private to that user, Google requires that a user give the Collabrify Roadmap Platform explicit permission to “see, edit, create, and delete” a file in that user’s Google Drive. And, given the above scenario – and similar scenarios – it is quite reasonable that a user would give the Collabrify Roadmap Platform permission to “see, edit, create, and delete” a file in a user’s Google Drive.

But, here is the potential problem that Google is concerned about. What if the Collabrify Roadmap Platform wanted to spy on a user and look at all the files in a user’s Google Drive – not just the files created while the user was working in a Roadmap? Or, what if the Collabrify Roadmap Platform ran amok and deleted all the files in a user’s Google Drive? It is, of course, inconceivable that the University of Michigan’s Center for Digital Curricula would condone or support such behavior by software that was created under its auspices.

The bottom line is this: by giving permission to the Collabrify Roadmap Platform to “see, edit, create, and delete all of your Google Drive files” a user is trusting the Collabrify Roadmap Platform, written by developers in the employ of the University of Michigan’s Center for Digital Curricula, to do no nefarious actions (e.g., spy on your files, delete your files) with respect to files in a user’s Google Drive

I hereby attest to the following: to the best of my knowledge, the Collabrify Roadmap Platform does nothing nefarious with respect to files in a user’s Google Drive. I hope that now you will move ahead to give the Collabrify Roadmap Platform the permission it needs in order to effectively support you as you use the Collabrify Roadmap Platform.

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



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