Internet privacy concern in a global age: The role of relational mobility

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Background

Internet privacy concern - concern over unauthorized third-party access to and dissemination of self-disclosures on the Internet (c.f. informational privacy, Burgoon et al., 1989, p. 134)

Societal differences do exist (Bellman, Johnson, Kobrin, & Lohse, 2004; Cao & Everard, 2008; Cho, Rivera-Sánchez, & Lim, 2009; Jones, 2010; Krasnova, Veltri, & Günther, 2012; Liu, Marchewka, & Ku, 2004; Lowry, Cao, & Everard, 2011; Park, 2008; Tsoi & Chen, 2011; Veltri, Krasnova, & Elgarah, 2011)

• Implications
  • Lost commerce revenue (Wu, Huang, Yen, & Popova, 2012)
Why?

trust

- National differences in privacy policies (Liu et al., 2004)
- Better policies, more consumer trust, less privacy concern

- National differences in privacy law/regulation (Bellman et al., 2004)
- Tougher laws, more consumer trust, less privacy concern

Particularized trust

Assurance (Yamagishi, 1998; 2011)
The forgotten type of trust

Generalized trust – entirely overlooked

An “expectation of goodwill and benign intent” of others in general
(Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994, p. 131)

A “psychological state to accept vulnerability based solely on [a person’s] expectation that most people are reliable, honest, good and kind, acting fairly, and not harming [others] intentionally”
(Gheorghiou et al., 2009, p. 366)
Why general trust?

Internet privacy concern (total)

“Appeased” privacy concern

“Un-appeased” privacy concern

Internet privacy concern in a global age
Higher generalized trust leads to less privacy concern

Countries differ in levels of generalized trust
(Yamagishi, 2011; Gheorghiu et al., 2009)
The degree to which there are opportunities to form new or sever current relationships in a society or social context (Falk et al., 2009; Schug et al., 2009, 2010; Sznycer et al., 2012; Wang & Leung, 2010; Yuki et al., 2007)

- **High** relational mobility society (e.g., US)
  - Open market for relationships
  - Generalized trust is *adaptive* (Yamagishi, 2011)

- **Low** relational mobility society (e.g. Japan)
  - Closed market for relationships
  - Generalized trust *less important* (Yamagishi, 2011)
Hypothesized model

- Relational mobility
- Generalized trust
- Country (Japan=1, US=2)
- Internet privacy concern

[Diagram showing the relationships between the variables]
Method

Participants (SNS users)

Japan  90 people \( (M_{\text{age}} = 33.98, SD_{\text{age}} = 8.96; 54 \text{ female}) \)

USA  256 people \( (M_{\text{age}} = 31.17, SD_{\text{age}} = 10.44; 152 \text{ female}) \)

Dependent measure

Internet privacy concern  (4-item; see Krasnova & Veltri, 2010; \( \alpha > .85 \))

Please imagine you’ve just posted some information (such as a photo of yourself, a wall post, your birth date, your real name etc.) on an SNS you use often. In regards to that information, how concerned would you be about the possibility of the following happening?

The information will be used in a way I did not foresee
The information will become available to someone without my knowledge etc
Mediating variables

**Generalized trust** (6-item, 1-7 likert; Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994; αs > .87)

E.g.
- Most people are honest
- Most people are basically good and kind

**Relational mobility** (12-item, 1-6 likert; Yuki et al., 2007; αs = .84)

E.g.,
- It is easy for people around you to meet new people
- It is often the case that people around you cannot freely choose who they associate with (reversed)
Results

Relational mobility
(1-6 scale)

General trust
(1-7 scale)

Privacy concern
(1-5 scale)

Japan  USA

Japan  USA

Japan  USA

p < .001, d = .96

p < .001, d = .47

p < .05, d = .27

3.5
Results - Generalized trust and relational mobility

\[ a = 0.381^{***} \]

\[ b = 0.163^{**} \]

\[ a^2 = 0.201^{***} \]

\[ a'^2 = 0.139^* \]

\[ c = -0.114^* \]

\[ c' = -0.036 \text{ n.s.} \]

\[ d = -0.140^* \]

\[ a^2d = -0.032 \text{ (95% CI = -0.066, -0.009), Indirect to total effect ratio = 0.28} \]

\[ abd = -0.009 \text{ (95% CI = -0.023, -0.001), Indirect to total effect ratio = 0.07} \]
Discussion

Theoretical implications

Social ecology drives beliefs which drive mindsets.

Practical implications

Understanding *offline* social ecologies helps us understand *online* behavior

Limitations

What about e-commerce?
Societal differences in *offline* relational mobility drive individuals to develop either high or low levels of trust in the generalized other.

These differences in generalized trust drive differences in privacy concern *online*.
References
CALL FOR COLLABORATORS

WORLD SURVEY
RELATIONSHIPS

5 min survey

similarity
intimacy
secrets

FIND OUT YOUR SCORE

Start survey
Hypotheses

H1  Japanese SNS users are more concerned about privacy online than United States SNS users

H2  The cultural difference in online privacy concern between Japan and the United States is mediated by general trust

H3  The cultural difference in generalized trust is mediated by relational mobility

H4  Overall, the cultural difference in online privacy concern between Japan and the United States is mediated by an indirect effect via both relational mobility and general trust
National differences in privacy concern

Cultural differences do exist (Bellman, Johnson, Kobrin, & Lohse, 2004; Cao & Everard, 2008; Cho, Rivera-Sánchez, & Lim, 2009; Jones, 2010; Krasnova, Veltri, & Günther, 2012; Liu, Marchewka, & Ku, 2004; Lowry, Cao, & Everard, 2011; Park, 2008; Tsoi & Chen, 2011; Veltri, Krasnova, & Elgarah, 2011)

Why?

• Differences in cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 1980; 2001) drive Internet privacy concern

  • Germany < USA (Krasnova & Veltri, 2010)
    Individualists demand privacy as a personal right!

  • China > USA (Lowry et al., 2011)
    Individualists care more about self-promotion than privacy!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relational Mobility</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Open Market” for relationships</td>
<td>“Closed Market” for relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HIGH gen. trust (Yamagishi, 2011)</td>
<td>LOW gen. trust (Yamagishi, 2011)</td>
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</tbody>
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### Table 1. Relational Mobility, Privacy Concern, and Trust by Country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Japan (N = 90)</th>
<th>United States (N = 256)</th>
<th>Between-country comparison</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>α</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational mobility</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy concern</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General trust</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001