

Measuring the Ethical Impact of Surveillance: Introducing the Chilling Effects in Media Scale

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Chilling effects are inhibitions of legitimate behaviours and are an important ethical side effect of, for example, corporate surveillance (e.g., online tracking). However, there is no validated scale to measure them. To develop and validate the Chilling Effects in Media (CEM) scale, we used a three-phased mixed-methods approach: (1) item generation using a literature review and qualitative interviews, (2) establishing content validity through experts interviews and a think-aloud study, and (3) establishing criterion and construct validity, and reliability through an online panel survey with 415 respondents, of whom 218 completed the items in the context of corporate surveillance, and 197 in the context of government surveillance. Factor analyses were conducted for each context separately, resulting into three factors per context which individually and collectively scored adequately on reliability and validity. The factors were partially overlapping and partially distinct, showing that corporate and government surveillance result in unique chilling effects.

Keywords: scale development, chilling effects, corporate surveillance, government surveillance, personalized advertising