Are Phones Really Listening to our Conversations to Personalize Ads?

Insights from a Survey among Advertising Professionals.

C. M. Segijn*[a], Rongjin Zhang [a], and J. Strycharz[b]

[a] Hubbard School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, USA; [b] Amsterdam School of Communication Research, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Correspondence concerning this submission should be addressed to Claire M. Segijn, Associate Professor, Hubbard School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Minnesota, 206 Church St. SE, Murphy Hall 111, Minneapolis, MN, 55455, United States; Phone +1 612-625-1338; Email: segijn@umn.edu.

Are Phones Really Listening to our Conversations to Personalize Ads? Insights from a Survey among Advertising Professionals.

With the prevalent surveillance belief among consumers that their electronic devices are listening to offline conversations for advertising purposes, this study aimed to investigate advertising professionals' views on conversation-related advertising (CRA). Through a survey with both closed and open-ended questions, we examined three key aspects: 1) whether CRA is happening according to advertising professionals, 2) their thoughts on consumers' beliefs and responses regarding CRA, and 3) their perspectives on how to educate consumers about the underlying processes and practices. The preliminary results revealed interesting patterns and insights that there was no consensus among advertising professionals about whether CRA is happening, but they believed the responsibility to inform consumers lies primarily with the industry itself. This study highlights the importance of transparency, the need for an open dialogue between the tech industry, advertising industry, and consumers to address privacy concerns and misconceptions surrounding data-driven advertising practices.

Keywords: Conversation-related advertising, advertising professionals, eavesdropping, surveillance perception, surveillance beliefs, privacy concerns.