The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Department of Information Systems, Business Statistics and Operations Management

Seminar Announcement
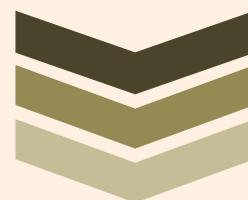
The Impact of GDPR on Content Providers
with V. Lefrere, L. Warberg, C. Cheyre, and V. Marotta

by

Prof. Alessandro ACQUISTI
Trustees Professor of Information Technology and Public Policy
Carnegie Mellon University

Abstract: We study the impact of the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on the advertising-supported online ecosystem. We focus on online content providers (such as news websites) and their users. We investigate whether restrictions on online tracking enforced by the regulation ultimately affect downstream variables such as the quantity of content that websites offer to their visitors and users' engagement with such content. The results suggest that the GDPR reduced the number of third-party cookies and tracking responses in both US and EU websites. Furthermore, the enactment of the GDPR may have to some extent negatively affected traffic to EU websites, relative to US websites. However, the enactment does not seem to have negatively affected the amount of content that EU websites were able to publish (relative to US websites), or the degree of average social media engagement and interaction with such content.

Bio: Alessandro Acquisti is the Trustees Professor of Information Technology and Public Policy at Carnegie Mellon University. He is the director of the Peex (Privacy Economics Experiments) lab at CMU and a Carnegie Fellow (inaugural class). Alessandro investigates the economics of privacy. His research has spearheaded the investigation of privacy and disclosure behavior in online social networks, and the application of behavioral economics to the study of privacy decision making. His studies have won numerous awards and have been published in outlets across multiple fields, including economics, computer science, psychology, and marketing. His findings have been featured in international media outlets, including Economist, NYT, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Financial Times, Wired, CNN, and 60 Minutes; his TED talks on privacy and behavior have been viewed over 1.3 million times. Alessandro holds a PhD from UC Berkeley, and Master degrees from Berkeley, LSE, and Trinity College Dublin.