RISKY BUSINESS: USING HEURISTIC-SYSTEMATIC PROCESSING THEORY TO UNDERSTAND CONSUMER DATA PRIVACY CONCERNS IN AN ONLINE BEHAVIORAL ADVERTISING CONTEXT

Heather Shoenberger

Dr. Esther Thorson, Dissertation Supervisor

ABSTRACT

Despite the possibility for misuse of their data, and previous research expressing consumer concern over privacy consumers continue to shop online. This study tests the idea that consumers’ navigation online leading to eventual purchases online is so ritualized and driven by short-cuts (e.g., brand familiarity) that processing information about the privacy safety offered by individual websites is mostly under the control of heuristic information processing. This study hopes to offer an explanation for the privacy paradox (despite apparent privacy concerns, Internet users rarely take self-protective measures to alleviate those concerns) and additionally, privacy concerns online seem to have little effect on consumer behavior when on the Internet. Implications for regulators and advertising practitioners into the complex processes are discussed.