



PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF SECURITY AND PRIVACY

Assessing Knowledge, Collecting Evidence, Translating Research into Action

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PACT Media Communication Seminar: Security and Privacy

Media communication is crucial in shaping public opinion about privacy and security, and hence effective communication is vital to policymaking and technology development. Communication, and the public reception of it, contributes to the societal metabolism of security-privacy debates: public perception partly shapes the issues. The practice of communicating security-privacy issues to the public is, therefore, highly nuanced.

In addition to its massive pan-European survey on the public perception of security and privacy, PACT is keen to promote broad, well-informed, multidisciplinary conversation on these topics. Media communication is therefore a central component of our approach. On the one hand, we aim to understand the dynamics of media communication in order to refine our analytical instruments; on the other, we aim to pave the way for communicating results of the PACT survey to the media and public in the best possible way. To this end, PACT's Scientific Coordinators, the Centre for Science, Society and Citizenship (CSSC), hosted a training seminar on “Media Communication, Security and Privacy” in Pordenone (near Venice) from June 20th to 22nd.

The central idea of the Media Communication seminar was for the PACT consortium to meet with a select group of journalists, experts in communication, and scholars in sociology, political sciences and strategic studies, in order to engage in scientific discussion investigating the interplays between information exchange, communication, security and insecurity, and trust and privacy. Exploiting the

quiet and isolation of the Venetian countryside, participants engaged in formal presentations and discussions, as well as informal conversations across lunch and dining tables.

In addition to representatives from the PACT partners, attendees included our invited experts: **Gary T. Marx**, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at M.I.T (see the interview with Professor Marx in this newsletter); **Duncan Campbell**, a celebrated, award-winning investigative journalist, author, consultant, and television producer, who specializes in privacy, civil liberties and surveillance issues, and has been responsible for breaking major stories (including the ECHELON revelations); **Stef Aupers**, a cultural sociologist at Erasmus University, Rotterdam, who has published widely on internet culture, game culture, and conspiracy culture; **Martin Mackin**, one of Ireland's most experienced communications strategists, with particular expertise in strategic counsel and corporate public relations, who was chief strategist with regard to campaigning and election strategy for Fianna Fáil from January 1998 until early 2003; **Yoav Evan**, health reporter and coordinator of *Channel 2 News*, the leading news provider in Israel, with experience covering medical and health issues; **Isabelle Le Breton-Falezan**, Assistant Professor at CELSA (Graduate School in Information and Communication Sciences), Sorbonne University in Paris, specializing in communications as a growing dimension in the field of sociology of international relations and political communication; **Brendan O'Neill**, editor of the online magazine *Spiked*, columnist



Photo by Zarko Drinic on Flickr

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/zarkodrinic/2117512295/>

for the *Big Issue* in London and *The Australian* in Sydney, who has written extensively on war, terrorism and politics; **Greg Simons**, Senior Researcher at the National Research Centre of Crisis Management Research and Training (Crismart) at the Swedish National Defence College, author of the recent *Mass Media and Modern Warfare: Reporting on the Russian War on Terrorism*, whose research interests include Russian mass media, crisis management communications, and media and armed conflict; and **François Géré**, a historian specializing in geostrategy, founding president of the *Institut français d'analyse stratégique* (IFAS), and also Knight of the French Legion of Honor.

Further details regarding the seminar, including speaker biographies and topics discussed, can be found on the PACT website: <http://www.projectpact.eu/news/pact-media-communication-seminar>. PACT would like to thank all participants for their valuable contributions to a successful seminar.

Renowned Scholar Gary T. Marx Speaks to PACT

In June this year Gary T. Marx, renowned Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), kindly spoke to the PACT newsletter team. Professor Marx has worked in a number of areas, including race and ethnicity, collective behaviour and social movements, and law and society. However for many years now he has been working on issues in surveillance, including covert policing, computer matching and profiling, work monitoring, drug testing, location monitoring, Caller-ID and communication manners, and is a central figure in the emergence of the surveillance studies field. Professor Marx argues for a broad approach that involves and seeks to integrate the historical, cultural, and social structures that inform contemporary surveillance practices. He takes the position that “surveillance is neither good nor bad, but context and comportment make it so”. For more details on Professor Marx’s many publications and distinguished career, see his website:

<http://web.mit.edu/gtmarx/www/garyhome.html>.

Meeting in Rome a fortnight before the PACT Media Communication Seminar, we took the opportunity to ask Professor Marx for his view on the relationship between theoretical, conceptual approaches to privacy and security – such as those employed by PACT during its “Root and Branch Review” process (see PACT Newsletter #1) – and more empirical approaches, such as that being carried out in PACT’s pan-European survey of 27,000 citizens (see PACT Newsletter #2).

It is important, Professor Marx told us, to be suspicious of overly simplistic dichotomies, and to pay attention to interdependencies. There is no way to communicate the empirical without conceptual ideas having an implicit – and sometimes explicit – influence. The facts do not speak for themselves: the “facts” become facts only because we provide cognitive ideas of concepts, and what falls within or without their boundaries. Thus there has to be a marriage of the conceptual and the empirical. Professor Marx observed that, as a social studies scholar, he draws on the humanities, with their emphasis on interpretation, subjectivity, and meaning, but also on the more empirical, quantitative approaches of the social sciences. In this way he shies away from purely deductive approaches, recommending instead that one seek to approach the world inductively – starting with the empirical and then working back and try to find categories that fit whatever one sees. Concepts are nothing more than heuristic devices, and one judges the heuristic value of them by observing their fit with the empirical. So the two approaches, conceptual and empirical, are not in tension. Concepts can be formulated from the empirical, and then applied back to the empirical in asking questions about particular dimensions or aspects of it.

A superficially simplistic dichotomy of particular interest in PACT is, of course, that between privacy and security. At the Root and Branch Review stage, PACT scholars found the “trade-off model” – according to which privacy and security are inherently in tension with one another, to the extent that, at a certain point, to increase one is unavoidably to decrease the other – to be highly questionable. This is a view with which Professor Marx expressed sympathy. The trade-off model is, in his view, simplistic. It is difficult, he stressed, not least because concepts like privacy, security, surveillance, suspicion, and others are complex. Privacy, for instance, is often thought of and discussed in the absence of any discussion of the importantly related concept of publicity. Privacy and publicity should go together in Professor Marx’s view. Similarly, in thinking about the idea that surveillance implies insecurity or suspicion, Professor Marx noted that, even though privacy experts are now accustomed to speak of the “new surveillance” – that is, the use of new and emerging technologies to “probe more deeply, widely and softly than traditional methods” into personal lives and information – it should be remembered that there has always been suspicion; that much at least is nothing new (whatever else we might say about the technologies now involved). Moreover, what one person classifies as “suspicion” might be called “validation” by another – and even given a positive spin. Surveillance need not always be about suspicion in the traditional sense, but is sometimes bound up with administrative and managerial practices and control. Perhaps this is part of what it means to speak of a “surveillance society”; but at the very least Professor Marx’s observations point to this: surveillance, understood in its contemporary context and form, is not related in any simplistic way to security and suspicion. The connections are subtly embedded in social relations. And this surely adds weight to his view (discussed above) on the need to combine conceptual and empirical approaches to understanding the kinds of issues arising in the PACT project.

The use of surveys in social research is challenging. As Professor Marx noted, surveys are sometimes associated in the public mind with marketing – an off-putting association for many. Methodologically, surveys are sometimes criticised on the grounds that the respondents don’t necessarily understand the questions posed in exactly the same way as those who devised them; or that the opinions respondents offer – which might conceivably have been formulated more or less on the spot, solely in reaction to the questions posed – are liable to be mistakenly treated by researchers as though they represented longstanding and well-considered views. In PACT, the partners leading



Surveillance society ... Banksy graffiti in London. Photograph: Cate Gillon/Getty

Image taken from

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/libertycentral/2009/mar/30/surveillance-work-privacy>

the survey development and roll-out – RAND Europe and IPSOS MORI – have worked closely with other partners to identify and mitigate these dangers. Professor Marx acknowledged these kinds of risks. On the question of the value or use of the answers that respondents provide, Professor Marx drew on the view of his onetime teacher, Erving Goffman, a leading light of twentieth century sociology: whatever responses the survey reveals, “it’s all data”; so whether someone’s response represents a well-considered expression of a longstanding view, or is formulated ad hoc, on the spot, it’s all data – something can be done with it. If the purpose of the empirical research is to see either “what’s out there”, or what happens when you elicit a response with a certain stimulus, then whatever result you get, it is at least data. The task of survey analysts is to make sense of the responses they receive. This is certainly a difficult undertaking. Yet there should be no recourse to accusations of superficiality or lack of understanding on the part of survey respondents. The fault – if there is one – lies with the data collectors and analysts for not being able to determine what the data that the survey elicits ultimately means or suggests. Thus the key question, Professor Marx insisted, would be: does the method fit the goal? That is, has the survey been designed in such a way that the data it elicits can be used to answer the questions, or solve the problems, with which the researchers were originally concerned? A significant intellectual responsibility then lies with researchers conducting surveys – a responsibility which PACT has taken very seriously.

The PACT newsletter team would like to take this opportunity to once again thank Professor Marx for taking the time to visit and speak to us in Rome. The issues discussed above, as well as related ideas, are expressed in his forthcoming book *Windows into the Soul: Surveillance and Society in an Age of High Technology*, published by the University of Chicago Press.

PACT EDITORIAL AND OPINION

In Ibsen's "An Enemy of the People", a doctor raises concerns about the newly constructed public baths, which he fears are fed with contaminated water. Although motivated by concern for the safety of others, the doctor's warning angers locals, who are eager to profit from the increased tourism the baths will bring. As the play ends, the doctor is branded an "Enemy of the People", and ostracised from the community. Although written more than a century ago, the play's depiction of the risks involved with whistleblowing remains relevant.

Though widely used, "whistleblower" is not a technical term, and lacks a common legal definition. However, writing in the *Journal of Business Ethics*, Near and Miceli (1985) put forward the following definition: "the disclosure by organisation members (former or current) of illegal, immoral or illegitimate practices under the control of their employers, to persons or organisations that may be able to affect action". A 2008 report from the Polish Academy of Science and the Business Ethics Centre opened with a note to the reader lamenting the "untranslatability" and "slightly negative connotation" of the word. This negative connotation echoes the villagers' reaction to the doctor's warning about the safety of the baths. Even if the act of whistleblowing is motivated by a sense of justice, it may still be unwelcome to those who stand to lose out, or who do not wish to consider the inconvenience of addressing the issues flagged.

According to Near and Micheli, whistleblowing follows a four stage process. The first stage is the initial "triggering event", followed by the second, the decision to take action. The third stage involves "blowing the whistle", which is followed, finally, by the reaction to the alert. While these four stages describe the general process of whistleblowing, there are other important factors to take into account. For instance, to whom should the whistleblower bring their grievance? Although going to an ex-

ternal source, such as a journalist, can result in public outcry, this should be a last resort. The goal of the whistleblower should be to effect positive change, or bring an end to malpractice. Thus the first step, in principle at least, ought to be to tackle issues in-house. In addition, other considerations complicate the ethics of whistleblowing. Anonymity, legal liability, libel, and fear of potential for retaliation – from employers, colleagues, the state, or even the public – all bear on an individual's decision to draw attention to corruption or fraud.

Legal protection afforded to whistleblowers varies greatly. In a world where businesses and corporations are no longer confined within state lines, providing clear guidelines and legal standards for whistleblowing is difficult. In December 2012, as part of its anti-fraud strategy, the European Commission published new internal guidelines to "remind staff of whistleblowing obligations". The guidelines promise "solid protection" to whistleblowers acting in good faith, and advise on who they should contact and with what information. However while this protection is provided for staff of the European Commission, there is uneven protection for whistleblowers in other organisations across Europe, particularly in the private sector.

To be effective, whistleblowing needs to occur in an environment with an independent legal system and judiciary. Ideally, the identity of the whistleblower is provided, as it adds accountability to the claims they make. However, the distinction between "whistleblower" and "informant" is less clear here. Arguably part of the role of the whistleblower is that he or she uses their identity and status within an organisation to add weight to the claims they make. Where legal systems are not independent, anonymity may be a necessity. In these cases, information is "leaked", often to journalists, who then themselves take on the whistleblower role. Chelsea Manning is the most recent example of this,

whereas Edward Snowden, by contrast, can be viewed as a more traditional whistleblower, since he did not attempt to conceal his identity, but instead conducted interviews adding weight to the documents he provided. Whistleblowing through news outlets has also happened in private business, notably in 1996 when Jeffrey Wigand, appearing on the US news programme 60 Minutes claimed that the big tobacco companies were fully aware of the addictive nature of their products, despite their claims to the contrary.

Whistleblowing can also be considered in the context of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). A strong CSR policy (or company governance policy) should have mechanisms in place to manage complaints or concerns concerning safety or corruption internally, negating the need for employees to step outside of the company or go to the press. Given the already noted negative connotations of the term, it is not surprising that companies may not wish to describe such measures as "whistleblower policy". But regardless of the name, having such guidelines in place can facilitate transparency and openness in company conduct, a vital facet of CSR.

Arguably the most pressing challenge facing legislators and regulators is to provide interoperable and enforceable standards and codes of conduct, harmonising approaches to whistleblowing and the treatment of whistleblowers. There is still much to be done to define what is and is not acceptable with respect to whistleblowing, particularly in the context of national security. The European Commission's internal guidelines aim at clearly identifying how employees may raise concerns about instances of corruption, mismanagement or unsafe practices. However, in an era of globalised business, the current state of regulations and guidelines at an international level leaves a lot to be desired. As it stands there is no guarantee, even two centuries removed from Ibsen's play, that a whistleblower will not be branded an "Enemy of the People".

"Even if the act of whistleblowing is motivated by a sense of justice, it may still be unwelcome to those who stand to lose out"



Image taken from <http://bigthink.com/think-tank/whistleblower-hero-or-mole>

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THE PACT CONSORTIUM

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- VITAMIB (France)
- Atos Spain S.A. (Spain)
- Centre for Irish and European Security (Ireland)
- IPSOS MORI (United Kingdom)
- KEMEA - Ministry of citizens protection (Greece)
- The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Israel)
- NCSR - Institute of Informatics and Telecommunications (Greece)
- Rand Europe (United Kingdom)
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Consortium Focus... Centre for Irish and European Security



CIES since its inception in 2008 has offered expert independent research in the field of Irish and European aviation, civil and border security. Most recently our research has been directed towards ethical and societal impact themes of security technology development and implementation. The only Irish SME of its kind delivering expert security research input into the European market, our rising success is reflected in the strength of current FP7 projects we are committed to (PACT; ETTIS and SECILE) and those due to begin in the near future (SOURCE; DRIVER;

INACHUS and SLANDAIL). Along with our research on the ethical and societal impact of security technology we offer expert input to policy integration and dissemination activities.

The company has harnessed its unique position in the Irish marketplace to forge strong, long-lasting collaborative relationships with a diverse blend of research centres, academic institutions and companies based in Ireland and abroad. Moreover, the CIES has fostered collaborative partnerships with leading civil liberty campaigners and academics from the UK and, where appropriate, calls upon their input to various tasks and projects. Alongside our direct FP7 commitments, CIES sits on a number of external FP7 project advisory boards throughout Europe. In addition, and external to FP7 research, the company sits on a number of advisory boards in Ireland, the UK and Europe.

Website: <http://cies.ie>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CISSMC>

Consortium Focus... IPSOS MORI



Ipsos is one of the largest survey-based market research companies in the world. It has over 16,000 research professionals across 85 countries worldwide and has global operational reach. Ipsos provides a full range of qualitative and quantitative research and evaluation services including face-to-face; telephone; and online interviewing and qualitative methods including focus groups; in-depth interviews; workshops and ethnography – along with data processing and analysis and sensitive, locally nuanced interpretation and reporting. Each year, it conducts survey research in over 120 countries; including many EU28 studies.

Ipsos' teams specialise in five global areas of research expertise – Public Affairs (public and business opinion, social research and reputation management); Loyalty (customer satisfaction and employee research); Marketing (forecasting, modelling, brand development and innovation); ASI (advertising and communications research); and Media Content and

Technology (measuring and understanding audiences across traditional and new media).

The team focused on the PACT study is drawn from Ipsos Public Affairs. It delivers robust, rigorous survey-based research, which helps decision-makers across the world understand views and experiences on the contemporary societal, and economic issues they face. Ipsos Public Affairs works closely with a wide range of clients including the EU institutions, International Financial Institutions, UN bodies, international NGOs and humanitarian organisations, and other clients with an international focus, including universities, foundations, think tanks and the media, alongside national governments, on the full range of public policy.

A key priority for Ipsos is ensuring that it is at the leading edge of thinking worldwide about survey research and how it needs to adapt in the face of social change. Ipsos' in-house International Research Methods Centre acts as a hub of innovation and excellence in sampling, survey methodology and advanced data analysis.

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<http://www.ipsos.com/public-affairs/SocialResearchInstitute>.

