

# The Impact of Personalization and Transparency Information Levels on Perceived Creepiness

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## **Abstract**

Following up Tene and Polonetsky's (2014) "theory of creepy", online marketing techniques experienced as highly personal and non-transparent (referred to as creepy advertising) repeatedly come into crosshairs of discussion in terms of marketing communication, especially when module changes are involved (e.g. talking about a product then seeing its advert later on social media). This study manipulates different levels of personalization and precision of transparency information in terms of an experimental 3x2 design to determine their effects on perceived creepiness mediated by perceived surveillance and further marketing-relevant reactions (perceived threat of individual choice, affective attitude, negative word-of-mouth) based on one online experiment. Results show that over-personalization and, surprisingly, precise transparency unsettle consumers and promise interesting ideas for marketing implications.

**Keywords:** *Personalization; Transparency; Creepiness*

**Track:** Advertising & Marketing Communications