Privacy and Big Data in Retailing: Opportunities and Challenges

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Growing numbers of retail companies are gathering massive amounts of customer information and using it in novel, if sometimes controversial, ways. Estimates suggest firms devote at least one-half of all "big data" and business analytics efforts toward better understanding existing and potential customers. While customers' detailed personal information is focal to providing insights, to date, there is little conversation about customer privacy perspectives as they relate to innovative retail technologies. While some views suggest that customers may forfeit elements of their privacy in exchange for better products and services, counterarguments show that customers report unprecedented levels of privacy concern. Retailers' mere access to customer information may heighten their feelings of vulnerability, and a recent Pew Survey found customers are worried their privacy will erode to the point of nonexistence.

The goal of the special issue is to provide a comprehensive overview of privacy in the retail environment, with special emphasis on the customer-firm interface. Collectively, we hope it will provide needed insights for how retailers can manage their customers' privacy concerns, while simultaneously advancing marketing theory on privacy. Key themes include (1) articulating and understanding sources of privacy concern in the retail environment, (2) managing privacy threats for both retailers and customers, and (3) anticipating the future of privacy in the retail environment. Areas of interest for the special issue might include, but are not limited to the following. A variety of perspectives and methodologies are both invited and welcomed.

- Retailer guidelines and protections for capturing customer information
- Pressing customer privacy concerns in both online and offline retail environments
- Existing retailer privacy deficiencies or customer disconnects
- Effects of retailer's "big data" efforts on consumer behaviors
- Privacy in the global retail landscape
- Novel retail technologies and unintended privacy consequences (e.g., geo-fencing/geo-conquesting, personalized recommendations, RFID and customer recognition)
- Customer defection and "off-the-grid" privacy behaviors
- Privacy as key differentiator or strategy in the retail environment
- Real-time customer-retailer privacy mitigation opportunities
- The role of social media or social buying behavior and privacy
- Pricing, promotions, inventory management, and other marketing actions that raise privacy concerns
- Retailers-customer privacy evolution over time
- Customer information as revenue source
- Effective recovery from privacy failures
- The retail environment given greater privacy limits or restrictions

Papers targeting the special issue should be submitted through the *Journal of Retailing* (JR) submission system and will undergo a similar review process as regularly submitted papers. Submissions for the special issue will begin on February 1, 2019, with the final deadline for submissions being July 15, 2019.

In addition to the special issue, there also will be a *Thought Leaders' conference on Privacy in Marketing*, to be held on June 6-8, 2019 In Florence Italy, hosted by University of Florence.

Interested researchers should submit proposals, abstracts, or papers to Rob Palmatier (palmatrw@uw.edu) and Kelly Martin (kelly.martin@colostate.edu) no later than March 1, 2019 (proposals will be accepted on an ongoing basis). Attending the conference and/or submitting a manuscript to JR for publication consideration are independent activities; authors are welcome to engage in one or both of these activities.