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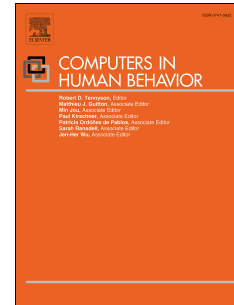
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The impact of different forms of cognitive scarcity on online privacy disclosure

Giuseppe A. Veltri¹ and Andriy Ivchenko²

Abstract

The way in which people manage information disclosure contributes to one of the biggest challenges of the information age – online privacy. The current study sheds a light on the privacy paradox, a gap between attitudes and behaviour, by exploring the role of cognitive scarcity in privacy disclosure behaviour. Using a large sample of the UK online general population (N=969), we conducted a Randomised Controlled Trial experiment to test the effect of two forms of induced cognitive scarcity: ego depletion and working memory load, on information disclosure levels. Results indicate a significant effect of both forms of scarcity on information disclosure in the direction of increasing the latter, even in the context of a generalised high disclosure. Findings are discussed in light of the privacy paradox, future research, possible remedies and interventions.

Keywords: Cognitive scarcity, information disclosure, working memory, ego depletion, privacy

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