Communication Privacy Management and Mobile Phone Use

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INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The International Telecommunication Union estimates that the number of in-use mobile phones exceeds the number of earth's population (Pramis, 2013). The social interactions resulting from the use of the six billion active cell phones have altered both public space and behavior (Katz, 2007; Ling, 2008), and a significant body of research suggests that mobile technology impacts our social networks and interactions (Banjo, Hu, & Sundar, 2008; Campbell, 2007, 2008; Geser, 2006, Inbar, Joost, Hemmert, Porat, & Tractinsky, 2014; Poutiainen, 2007).

Mobile phone use challenges traditional notions of personal privacy and interaction involvement. Communication privacy management addresses how individuals control and reveal private information (Petronio, 2007). At the heart of their social interactions is how mobile phone users balance obligations to absent others (i.e., the caller) against their responsibilities to proximate or co-present others (i.e., people around them), while at the same time managing privacy concerns of all parties (Banjo et al., 2008).

The theory of communication privacy management was first introduced by Sandra Petronio (1991). A Professor of Communication Studies at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, she has authored and co-authored numerous books and articles on CPM. More recent publications provide summaries of the theory (Petronio, 2008; Serewicz & Petronio, 2007), outline the development of CPM (2004), expand on the role of confidants (Petronio & Reierson, 2009) and secrecy (Petronio, 2000), and apply CPM to a variety of contexts (see, for example, Duggan & Petronio, 2009; Greene, Derlega, Yep, & Petronio, 2003).

Rich Ling, Ph.D., of IT University of Copenhagen, is a leading researcher in the area of the social consequences of mobile communication. He has authored and co-authored multiple books and articles in this area, including *New Tech, New Ties*: *How Mobile Communication is Reshaping Social Cohesion* (2010), *Mobile Phones and Mobile Communication (Polity)* (with Jonathan Donner) (2009), and *Taken for Grantedness: The Embedding of Mobile Communication into Society* (2012). A frequent co-author with Ling, Dr. Scott W. Campbell of the University of Michigan, has also made significant contributions to our understanding of normative mobile phone behaviors (e.g., *Mobile Communication: Bringing us Together and Tearing us Apart,* 2011; *The Reconstruction of Space and Time: Mobile Communication Practices,* 2009). His research in mobile telephony emphasizes the social implications of the medium. To date, only one study has applied the principles of CPM to mobile telephony (see Worthington, Fitch-Hauser, Valikoski, Imhof, & Kim, 2011).

In the following pages, we define privacy, outline components of communication privacy management theory, examine its application to mobile communication, and outline areas of future research.

SOCIAL NORMS AND MANAGING PRIVACY

The introduction of new technologies effects rapid social change and challenges social norms. Rapid change can result in differing expectations of what is appropriate behavior when using the technology. As rules that guide behavior, social norms provide a framework for individuals to assess which behaviors are acceptable and which are not (McLaughlin & Vitak, 2011). Social norms vary by gender, age, relationships and culture (Axelsson, 2010; Hall, Baym, & Miltner, 2014; Johar, 2005), and may or may not be followed at any given moment (Kallgren, Reno, & Cialdini, 2000). Despite this variability, social norms are the ties that bind social and relational order.

Privacy is a multi-faceted concept. Both a dynamic and dialectic process, the notion of privacy suggests that individuals regulate boundaries of disclosure, personal identity, and temporality (Palen & Dourish, 2003). More specifically, it refers to our ability to manage when, how, and the extent to which our personal information is revealed to others (Westin, 1967). Mobile phone norms have reached the point where particular behaviors can be seen as violations of others' rights, as insensitive, or as abusive (Ling & McEwen, 2010).

When discussing the intersection of technology and privacy, people often focus on technical issues associated with technology use (see, for example, Boyles, Smith, & Madden, 2012). In reality, individuals focus greater attention on managing privacy in their interpersonal lives. Only recently has attention been paid to matters of privacy and mobile communication.

REVIEW OF COMMUNICATION PRIVACY MANAGEMENT THEORY

Because CPM was originally developed for and applied to interpersonal relationships, much of the initial research focused on interpersonal contexts (e.g., family, health, etc.) (see, for example, Petronio, 2006; Petronio & Caughlin, 2005; Petronio, Jones, Morr, 2003;). However, since its introduction, CPM has been applied to a variety of mediated settings (e.g., short-message service, computer-mediated technology, and social media to explain disclosure in alternative contexts (see, for example, Child, Haridakis, & Petronio, 2012; Cho & Hung, 2011; Frampton & Child, 2013; Metzger, 2007; Waters & Ackerman, 2011).

Petronio (2007) describes CPM theory as "an evidenced-based, applied theory construct to be translatable into practices" (p. 219). The theory addresses the tension we experience when choosing what personal information will be revealed and what will remain private in our interactions with others (Petronio (2002). Underlying this tension is the assessment of the risks and benefits of disclosing to others and balancing desires for privacy against need for disclosure. Risks arise with disclosure, because once information is shared with another it moves from private ownership to shared or co-ownership.

Because of the threat of risks, we create boundaries around what we consider to be public information and private information. The purpose of these boundaries is to govern who has control of and access to information as well as how to protect that information (Petronio, Sargent, Andea, Reganis, & Cichocki, 2004). We manage or coordinate privacy boundaries based on negotiation of privacy rules related to linkages, boundary permeability, and information ownership (Petronio, 2002).

Linkages address the mutually agreed-upon privacy rules used to identify those who may share knowledge of the collectively held information (Petronio, 2002). Privacy rules regulate when and

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