Call for Papers
Digital Resignation and Privacy Cynicism

Special Issue of *Big Data & Society*

Abstract Submission Deadline: 19 December 2022
Full Paper Submission Deadline: 31 March 2023

We invite abstract submissions for a special issue of *Big Data & Society* on Digital Resignation and Privacy Cynicism. This special theme will act as a forum for cutting edge research that both explores, extends, and challenges our understanding of privacy cynicism, digital resignation, and related concepts. We invite abstracts for papers that engage theoretical and practical questions regarding the conceptualization, measurement, and response to the pervasive and seemingly unavoidable use of personal information in the digital era.

Special Theme Editors (alphabetical order): Nora A. Draper, Christian Pieter Hoffmann, Christoph Lutz, Giulia Ranzini, and Joseph Turow

Scope:
In recent privacy research, a new perspective is emerging that centers on user agency—or the lack thereof—as a critical but under-examined aspect of privacy attitudes and behaviors. Independently and across contexts, scholars have noted the manifestation of resigned attitudes towards (online) privacy, variably termed privacy apathy (Hargittai & Marwick, 2016), privacy cynicism (Hoffmann et al., 2016; Lutz et al., 2020), surveillance realism (Dencik & Cable, 2017), privacy fatigue (Choi et al., 2018), digital resignation (Turow et al., 2015; Draper & Turow, 2019), and privacy helplessness (Cho, 2021). Despite differences in terminology and empirical approaches, these works share the conclusion that a sizable share of users feel overwhelmed and disempowered when it comes to protecting their privacy from the threats posed by the digital infrastructures they rely on for social and economic inclusion. Initial efforts to identify, conceptualize, and investigate attitudes of resignation have raised questions about the contours of these frustrations as well as their predictors.

We invite papers on, but not limited to, the following topics:

- **Conceptual/theoretical differentiation and clarification:** What are commonalities and differences between privacy apathy, privacy cynicism, surveillance realism, privacy fatigue, digital resignation, and privacy helplessness? How do they relate to adjacent concepts such as privacy concerns and privacy turbulence? How can established privacy theories such as privacy as contextual integrity, communication privacy management, and the privacy calculus accommodate privacy apathy/cynicism/fatigue/helplessness, surveillance realism, and digital resignation? Can broader sociological, psychological, and communication theories be meaningfully aligned with privacy

apathy/cynicism/fatigue/helplessness, surveillance realism, and digital resignation?

- **Antecedents:** How are privacy apathy/cynicism/fatigue/helplessness, surveillance realism, and digital resignation structured along social lines? Are they most pronounced among marginalized groups or among privileged groups - and why? What is the role of digital skills and privacy literacy in mitigation? How do psychological and personality-related predictors affect privacy apathy/cynicism/fatigue/helplessness, surveillance realism, and digital resignation? How do previous experiences matter?

- **Contextual differentiation:** Is privacy apathy/cynicism/fatigue/helplessness, surveillance realism, and digital resignation more prevalent for certain types or dimensions of privacy compared to others (e.g., institutional vs. social; informational vs. physical vs. psychological)? What is the role of specific technologies, services, and stakeholders? How does privacy apathy/cynicism/fatigue/helplessness, surveillance realism, and digital resignation vary by the complexity and invasiveness of certain technologies and services or is it a more generic and diffuse attitude?

- **Outcomes:** What is the link between privacy apathy/cynicism/fatigue/helplessness, surveillance realism, digital resignation on the one hand and privacy protection behavior on the other? Are there certain types of privacy apathy/cynicism/fatigue/helplessness, surveillance realism, and digital resignation that have some activating power, rather than leading to passivity? How does privacy apathy/cynicism/fatigue/helplessness, surveillance realism, digital resignation result in heightened vulnerability and susceptibility to manipulation?

- **The role of organizations and institutions:** How do digital corporations benefit from and potentially foster privacy apathy/cynicism/fatigue/helplessness, surveillance realism, digital resignation through their communication and design practices? What is the role of institutions such as schools, the media sector, universities, public services, and law enforcement in the creation or mitigation of privacy apathy/cynicism/fatigue/helplessness, surveillance realism, digital resignation?

- **Comparative insights:** How does privacy apathy/cynicism/fatigue/helplessness, surveillance realism, and digital resignation differ between geographic areas? Specifically, does privacy apathy/cynicism/fatigue/helplessness, surveillance realism, and digital resignation occur equally in the Global South and Global North? Do political systems and regimes matter?

- **Remedies and policies:** How can regulation empower citizens to be less apathetic, cynical, fatigued, helpless, and resigned when it comes to online privacy? What are meaningful ways in which legal, technological, and social interventions can be combined to address privacy apathy/cynicism/fatigue/helplessness, surveillance realism, and digital resignation? Do literacy initiatives need to take into consideration the role of privacy apathy/cynicism/fatigue/helplessness, surveillance realism, and digital resignation?

- **Resistance and repair:** How can individuals and collectives meaningfully resist data/surveillance capitalism and overcome surveillance realism, digital resignation, and privacy apathy/cynicism/fatigue/helplessness? What promising initiatives and practices exist? What is the role of repair practices (Velkova & Kaun, 2021)?

We welcome theoretical/conceptual and empirical submissions across academic disciplines. Interdisciplinary collaborations and contributions from non-WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialized, rich, democratic) countries are particularly encouraged. Empirical submissions can draw on quantitative research, qualitative research, digital methods, and other methodological paradigms, with mixed-methods work particularly welcome.

Format:
This special issue will include full length original research papers and shorter commentary articles. Interested authors will submit abstracts (500-word max) and short author biographies for review by the special issue editors. Authors should specify in their abstract whether they intend to submit an original research paper (up to 10,000 words) or a commentary (up to 3000 words) for the full paper deadline in case the abstract is accepted. Authors of selected abstracts will submit full papers, which will undergo full peer review with *Big Data & Society*; therefore, selected abstracts are not guaranteed publication in the special issue.

Timeline:
- Open Call Abstract Submission Deadline: **19 December 2022**
- Notifications of acceptance of the proposals: 31 January 2023.
- Deadline for full papers: **31 March 2023**
- Peer review process: April 2023 - November 2023
- Publication of the special theme: Early 2024

Interested authors should submit abstracts (500-word max) and short biographies to Professor Christian Pieter Hoffmann (christian.hoffmann@uni-leipzig.de) by 19 December 2022. Questions can also be sent to Professor Hoffmann.

About Big Data & Society:
Big Data & Society (BD&S) is an open access, peer-reviewed scholarly journal that publishes interdisciplinary work principally in the social sciences, humanities and computing and their intersections with the arts and natural sciences about the implications of Big Data for societies.

The Journal's key purpose is to provide a space for connecting debates about the emerging field of Big Data practices and how they are reconfiguring academic, social, industry, business and government relations, expertise, methods, concepts and knowledge.

BD&S moves beyond usual notions of Big Data and treats it as an emerging field of practices that is not defined by but generative of (sometimes) novel data qualities such as high volume and granularity and complex analytics such as data linking and mining. It thus attends to digital content generated through online and offline practices in social, commercial, scientific, and government domains. This includes, for instance, content generated on the Internet through social media and search engines but also that which is generated in closed networks (commercial or government transactions) and open networks such as digital archives, open government and crowdsourced data. Critically, rather than settling on a definition the Journal makes this an object of interdisciplinary inquiries and debates explored through studies of a variety of topics and themes.

Homepage: https://journals.sagepub.com/home/BDS

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