



# Nobody's Unpredictable

## Globalization of Personal Data Project

### – International Survey

## Findings from the China Pre-Survey Focus Groups

#### Submitted to:

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# Table of Content

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Research Methodology.....	2
3. Key Findings.....	3
4. Conclusion.....	20



## Introduction

- The GPD Project is an 11-country study of privacy attitudes, involving both quantitative and qualitative research.
- China is one of the study area, Ipsos China is responsible for respondent recruiting and focus group conducting
- The objectives of the focus groups in China were to provide the research team with insight on the issues and how they perceived from a Chinese perspective.
- It should be borne in mind when reading this report that these findings are drawn exclusively from qualitative research (2 focus groups). While every effort is made to balance various demographic characteristics when recruiting participants, these groups (and therefore the findings drawn from them) may not be said to be representative of the larger population as a whole.



# Research Methodology

The research findings are based on the following:

- In total, two focus groups were conducted in Beijing China on Nov. 26<sup>th</sup>. 2004
- The first focus group was held with workers and travelers, and the second with consumers and citizens
- The groups lasted approximately two hours and were held in a dedicated facility to allow for audio and videotaping.
- A total of 28 individuals were recruited for each of the focus groups, 14 people attended the discussion, the other 14 people were recruited as back-up. In total, 56 individuals were recruited and 27 attended the group discussions, one respondent withdrew during the meeting.
- All participants received a cash incentive for their involvement.



## Key findings

### ■ Perceptions and Experiences with Privacy Issues

#### --The top-of-mind image of privacy and security

- With regard to “privacy”, the top-of-mind images from different people are relatively similar, most of them are broad concepts like something do not want other people to know, own personal secret and so on. Few people mentioned some specific things like sexual relationship.
- However, in relation to “security”, people pointed to many particular images such as life, family, health, possession, driving, and social security.



## Key findings

### --What is privacy as a value

- When talking about value issue, most participants could not give a clear definition of it, some people felt it too abstract to say, while some other people thought value mean different things to different people, there is no consistent concept. A small amount of people considered value embody personal capability, self-identity, or even success.
- Then participants were probed on the topic of “privacy as value”, what first came to many peoples’ mind was the profit gained after privacy has been exposed. For example, some magazines earn money by publishing celebrities’ private lives. Or being a common people, getting hurt when privacy being invaded also means a value to oneself. One participant drew a conclusion that there were two kinds of value for privacy, one is value to other people, the other one is to oneself.



## Key findings

### -- Changes of privacy over the past 5 years

Different people have different view points on topic of "whether privacy became less or more over the past 5 years"

- Some people claimed that they have more privacy than before since their privacy has increased along with growing up. some other people saw privacy as a right, they felt they have more right than before, therefore privacy increased accordingly.
- While the other participants pointed out that they felt their privacy is declining due to the development of technology. Another consideration was the definition of privacy has changed nowadays, something once called privacy is no more private now, this change closely related to society development and media promotion, many participants commented that media really has a big impact on peoples' attitude towards privacy. As one respondent remarked "many things tend to be common when they are exposed on media many times"

## -- The concerns of privacy

- Many participants said they don't have much concerns on privacy most of the time. While when they are aware that their privacy might be invaded, they may take some actions to protect their privacy, such as changing password frequently, not telling private information to other people, withdrawing money from bank counter instead of from ATM, etc.
- Most people would not talk about private issues with family or friends, on the contrary, one young participant mentioned that she would rather talk to strangers than close people, like chatting on internet, most people there don't know each other.
- When probed on whether certain groups in society are more susceptible to invasions of privacy than others, many participants tended to say celebrities and wealthy people are more likely to be invaded, since they got more chance to become the public focus of attention. However some other participants thought low-income groups are more susceptible, because these people are too weak to protect themselves.



## Key findings

### -- Personal experience of privacy invasion

- Most people said that they didn't have experience of serious privacy invasion. Only one lady mentioned that her ID card number had been copied and used by someone for buying mobile phone.
- Though only few people have ever experienced serious privacy invasion, but "light" privacy invasion happened all the time, people just were not aware of it because they have already get used to it, example included being asked to show your ID card by non-judicial organization, or receiving telemarketing phone calls, or being monitored by surveillance camera.
- Then participants were asked about what privacy can be compromised, many people commented that they would rather say it as "have to be compromised" . One participant concluded and said "when the benefit you get is more important than the privacy you will lose, then this kind of privacy can be compromised" . For example, when applying for a loan, you had to tell your finance status , your address and contact info, otherwise you could not get the money.

## ■ Expectation regarding privacy issues in the future

- Most participants could not tell what type of privacy invasion could happen in the future, because there are too many uncertainties in life. But there was no doubt that threat of privacy invasions will become greater in the future due to technology development, such as increasingly powerful internet.
- As to which things may not be as private in the future, some people suggested identity information might not be private if it could be replaced by other technologies, like voice identity.
- As mentioned above, technology and internet will become the biggest threat to privacy. One participant imagine that in the future the search tool might become powerful enough to search out some confidential information which kept only by government.



# Key findings

## ■ Privacy technologies and legislation

### -- Technologies

- A great number of participants believe that internet technologies expose their private information to a larger extent. Examples like the theft of registered information such as password, phone number, and email address. However most people still use the internet on day-to-day basis. The best way to protect their privacy is not giving certain information or giving false information if possible.
- With respect to the changes of the use of these technologies by companies or governments, participants viewed the technologies are more powerful. An example is Chinese government has applied the new identity card which contained much more personal information than the old one has.



## Key findings

### -- Legislation

- Many participants believed that laws to protect privacy did exist, but they had no idea on what these laws actually are.
- When were asked about the thoughts on restriction on how governments and companies use personal information, participants showed different ideas on these two parties. Many participants did not quite believe that laws can restrict government departments' activities because no one can supervise them. However if companies broke the law, it would be easier for common people to accuse them than to accuse government. Many participant also remarked that the legal system in China is in its early stage, the qualification of people who execute the law is under improvement.
- Then the conversation moved to the topic of preference on “security” or “personal privacy” . Female participants tended to choose “security”. Some people commented that it should base on different situations. If it's related to life, security is more important than privacy. Examples like security in the airport, surveillance cameras in elevator. If just for information collection purpose, privacy is more important than security.



# Key findings