

EVALUATING THE ETHICAL CONDUCT OF USING PERSONAL DATA FOR DIGITAL MARKETING: A USER PERSPECTIVE STUDY

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Declaration

I declare that this is my own work, and this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any other university or institute of higher learning and to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where the acknowledgement is made in the text.

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The above candidate has carried out research for the master's thesis under my supervision.

Name of the supervisor (internal): Dr. H. A. C. Hettiarachchi

Signature of the supervisor (internal):

Date: 16.08.2024

Abstract

Evaluating the Ethical Conduct of Using Personal Data for Digital Marketing: A User Perspective Study

This study investigates the ethical implications of using personal data for digital marketing from a user perspective. With the rise of big data and sophisticated algorithms, digital marketers leverage vast amounts of user data to deliver high targeted advertising campaigns. While this data driven approach offers undeniable benefits in terms of personalization and campaign effectiveness, it also raises significant ethical concerns. This research aims to explore user awareness of data collection practices, their concerns about informed consent and their perception on data privacy security.

Through a structured questionnaire survey, data was collected from young adults in Sri Lanka to assess their perceptions of these issues. The findings indicate that users value informed consent, with a significant portion expressing the need for clear explanations of data collection practices and greater control over their personal data. Additionally, moderate levels of concern were noted regarding data privacy and security, highlighting the necessity for digital marketers to address these issues to maintain user trust.

Based on these insights, the study provides several recommendations for improving the ethical use of personal data in digital marketing. These include enhancing transparency and communication, strengthening informed consent mechanisms, prioritizing data privacy and security, and fostering user education and awareness. By implementing these measures, companies can develop more ethical and user-centric digital marketing practices that respect user privacy and build trust.

Keywords: user perception, digital marketing, ethics, personal data

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List of Abbreviations

AMA	American Marketing Association
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
OBA	Online Behavioral Advertising
SEO	Search Engine Optimization
SEM	Search Engine Marketing
PPC	pay-per-click
PET	Privacy Enhancing Technology
CPEOR	Consumer Perception of Online Retailer Ethics
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Science
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
CCPA	California Consumer Privacy Act