

Study of adolescents' perspectives on commercial profiling, privacy

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Researchers at the Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy at the University of Jyväskylä have explored adolescents' awareness of being commercially profiled online and their perspectives on online targeted

advertisements. The data for the study consisted of eight focus group discussions (N = 38) conducted between December 2020 and May 2021 with adolescents aged 13 to 16 years in schools across Finland's capital region. The findings are [published](#) in the *Journal of Children and Media*.

Adolescents had multiple perspectives on online targeted advertisements. Some participants found targeted advertisements helpful, whereas others found them helpful but also concerning. Some thought that targeted advertisements encourage overconsumption. A few noted that targeted advertisements hinder new perspectives and product choices. There were some participants who found online profiling to be invasive of their privacy because it gave them a feeling of being watched. The participants found it particularly disturbing that [voice data](#) was collected without their consent.

"While it cannot be conclusively suggested that corporations use data from previous conversations to profile consumers, it is also important to take [adolescents'](#) concerns seriously," Doctoral Researcher Sonali Srivastava says. "Therefore, we urge corporations to make their online data gathering process transparent."

However, some participants were not disturbed by online profiling. Some considered online data gathering permissible until a certain limit. This suggests that although the participants condemned the collection of voice data, the monitoring of previous online actions was expected or "normal" and, hence, permissible.

"Permissive attitudes can lead to [young people](#) getting used to digital commercial surveillance and that they question it less in the future," says Srivastava. "Adolescents need much more [accurate information](#) about the processes of commercial profiling and the ramifications of such practices."

More information: Sonali Srivastava et al, Awareness of digital commercial profiling among adolescents in Finland and their perspectives on online targeted advertisements, *Journal of Children and Media* (2023). [DOI: 10.1080/17482798.2023.2257813](https://doi.org/10.1080/17482798.2023.2257813)

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