Privacy in a new democracy: Changing attitudes in a changing society?

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Hungary on the map of Europe
Hungary beyond the Iron Curtain
Hungary within the EU borders
Hungary with “Some safeguards but weakened protection”
The first survey: 1989

- First in its area in Hungary and in the CEE region
- Data collection: October 1989 (personal interviews)
- Nation-wide sample: 1000 persons
- Representativity: sex, age groups, educational level, type of place of residence
- 153 interviewers, 15 instructors
- Preliminary in-depth interviews
- Test survey
Main findings: 1989

- Moderate awareness of potential uses and abuses of data
- Obedience in supplying data
- Considerable distrust towards government agencies, centralized and computerized data processing
- Privacy/data protection factor, trust/order factor
- Pro-computer and anti-computer attitudes
- Sensitivity scale of personal data, and of examples of invasion of privacy
- A “mysterious”, privacy-conscious social stratum (no correlation with demographics)
Data sensitivity

Examples of invasions of privacy

Privacy-conscious social stratum

Whole sample

(1989)
Trust in data controllers

Fairest/least fair data controllers in 1989

Fairest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Trust in 1989</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workplace</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nat'l Savings Bank</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local councils</td>
<td>40</td>
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Least Fair

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Trust in 1989</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tax office</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local councils</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill collectors</td>
<td>35</td>
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Trust in 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Trust in 2006</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>55</td>
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Central registration/ID card

1989: Universal PIN (approve) 73% (q.6)
2006: National ID card (agree) 93% (Q.9/b)
Data sharing

1989

- Data sharing: 80%
- Linking registries: 60%
- Registries to business: 0%

2006

- Gov't - Gov't: 0%
- Gov't - foreign Gov't: 20%
- Gov't - private sector: 40%

Yes
No

Always
Never
Disobedience / Resistance

1989: At official places unwilling to give data about oneself: 6% (q.10)
1989: Data should *not* be precise and complete: 6% (q.20)
2006: Refused to give information to a government agency: 8% (Q.7)
Wrong-doing / fishing in troubled waters

1989: More data should be registered about people, so that certain people cannot “fish in troubled waters” 46% (q.12/4)

2006: If suspected of wrong-doing: Gov’t agency – Gov’t agency 33%
Gov’t – foreign Gov’t 43% (Q.18)
(Extreme characteristics:) **Knowledge**

Knowledge of laws: **LOWEST** (18%)

seems inconsistent with:

- wide-spread legal and institutional system
- media coverage (see Background Report and focus groups)
- gov’t and business complaints about high media coverage (see also 1990 press survey – number of news/articles)
- well-known, publicized landmark cases
- knowledge about the DP Commissioner in 1998: 43%

Knowledge of technologies: **AMONG THE LOWEST**

seems inconsistent with:

- moderate internet penetration
- very high mobile penetration
Resistance

Things done to protect personal information (Q.7)

- against government data controllers: **LOWEST**
- against business data controllers: **AMONG THE LOWEST**

Privacy invasion experienced (Q.8)

- At the workplace: **HIGHEST** (31%)
Visible minorities

Privacy of minorities in the media (Q.16): **HIGHEST** (48%)

- probably the Roma

Extra airport checks to minorities (Q.26): **LOWEST ACCEPTANCE** (28%)

- Nationalism/anti-Americanism?
- Protection of Roma?
- East European tourists as “visible minorities”?
Trust in data controllers

Governmental data controllers (Q.5): **HIGHEST** (51%)

Business data controllers (Q.6): **HIGHEST** (53%)

Trust in personal relationships seems inconsistent with:

- traditional distrust towards government
- traditional distrust towards business
- the gap between “They” and “Us”
- supposedly moderate social capital
- focus group interviews and Background Report
- complaints from both government and business about low level of trust

“All governments are lying”

“The wealthy always have something to hide”
Internet and profiling

Personal information on the internet (Q.11):

Extent of worry: **LOWEST** (45%)

Extent of worry (Internet users): **SECOND LOWEST** (51%)

Acceptance of customer profiling (Q.28): **BY FAR THE HIGHEST** (69%)

**Extent to say**

(Q.2): **LOWEST** (45%)

Obedience? Pessimism?
Data sharing

Government to foreign government (Q.18): **AMONG THE HIGHEST** (67%)

- anti-terrorist measures?
- over-zeal of a “border-country”?

Employer to government (Q.22): **HIGHEST** (51%)

- submission to the Little Brothers?

*Hungary is one of the safest places*
Surveillance vs. local and national security

Intrusiveness of national security laws (Q.17): LOWEST (40%)

Acceptance of national ID cards (Q.9b): BY FAR THE HIGHEST (93%)

- survival (and renewed legitimation) of centralized registration

Effectiveness of community CCTV (Q.20): HIGHEST (87%)

Effectiveness of in-store CCTV (Q.20): SECOND HIGHEST (86%)

- strong coalition of risk industry and politics
- media support
Country profile (extremes)

**HIGH or HIGHEST**

- Privacy invasion at the workplace
- Trust in government data controllers
- Trust in business data controllers
- Acceptance of data sharing between the employer and the government
- Acceptance of CCTV
- Acceptance of national ID cards
- Acceptance of customer profiling

**LOW or LOWEST**

- Knowledge about privacy laws
- Worry about the internet
- Judgment of national security laws
- The feeling to have a say
- Activity to protect personal information
Possible explanations

• Low tide of rights and liberties
• A „new capitalist” generation
• New techniques, unprepared population
• Foreign companies, discredited trade unions
• Over-politization – a Morbus Hungaricus
• Imbalanced values and attitudes
• Low level of NGO/civil activity
A general observation: “Threshold of abstraction”

It is not the violation of privacy that counts – but its perceptibility

The more abstract – the less important
(no matter how grave the violation is)
Actors deserving further investigation: The IT professionals

- Invisible but essential actors
- Their indirect impact on transitional societies
- Hungary/CEE – the natural allies of information monopolies
- USA – iconic figures: modern Robin Hoods
- An unexplored group in privacy research
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