The Web watches and remembers everything: The ethical implications of employee and Customer digital footprints

Ozlem Ayaz-Arda,
Brunel University London

S. Asieh Tabaghdehi,
Brunel University London

Ainurul Rosli,
Brunel University London

Prerna Tambay
University of Bedfordshire

Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore the new area of discussion about digital footprint and propose a new way of looking into it by addressing small and medium sized enterprises' (SMEs) ethical actions. This study extends the existing studies to illustrate the depth and breadth of research on digital footprint across different domains. We first outline the potential impacts of digital footprints on (i) employees from the ethical perspectives and (ii) ethical organisational action, leading towards (iii) business value creation. The literature on digital footprints and its ethical implication is still in its infancy and diversified among the disciplines. We have noticed that the literature on management and organisations has relatively ignored the implications of digital footprints both at individual and organisational levels. This study provides an initial step towards a better management of digital footprints to create ethical organisational actions through data privacy management, ii) data transparency management, iii) digital footprint awareness, and iv) data protection management.