

# Chapter 1

## Executive Summary

India, world's largest democracy, has witnessed enormous development in information technology over past few years. It has become a necessity to share personal information for every service, from getting a mobile phone connection to registering for online banking, which have become indispensable in the 21st century. India being a collectivist society (one of the developing countries part of BRIC <sup>1</sup> nations), has different expectations of privacy than other developed nations. The concept of privacy in India has not been investigated in detail, and we also lack empirical data with respect to privacy perceptions among Indian citizens. Recent developments in the Indian scenario e.g. privacy bill, NATGRID, UID project, signify need for privacy awareness and understanding in Indian masses. It is also important for policy makers to comprehend sentiment and opinion of masses for structuring effective laws and policies for citizens of India. Our study focuses on understanding privacy perceptions and expectations of Indian citizens. In the first phase, we conducted interviews among 20 participants and 4 focus group discussions with 31 participants in total, to collect qualitative data about the privacy perceptions. In the second phase, we developed a survey questionnaire to collect quantitative data. We collected responses (10,427) from various cities in India which could help in creating an information base for masses and policy makers, showcasing the true (perceived) picture of privacy in India on various platforms e.g. mobile phones, credit cards, online social networks, and government related issues. We hope this understanding helps decision makers and technology developers in producing customizable solutions and laws for Indian users. Also, it will help us in identifying conflicting nature of users in their expectations and practices on privacy matters.

Key takeaways from this research work are stated below; these are drawn from the interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys that we conducted to study the privacy perceptions in India. As far as our knowledge goes, this is the largest ever study on privacy perceptions in India, we also believe that, this is the case around the world too. <sup>2</sup>

- **General Privacy:**

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<sup>1</sup>BRIC is an acronym which refers to the four countries - Brazil, Russia, India and China

<sup>2</sup>The main intent for this technical report is to give the raw data that we collected, and some preliminary analysis without delving deeper into the analysis and implications of the conclusions. We hope the reader will read the report by referring to the appropriate appendixes, as referred in the report. We are working on an academic paper with this data.

- Participants related to communication privacy and Internet privacy mostly, when asked about the first reactions for the word “*privacy*.” Participants showed more concerns about privacy through mobile phones, and Internet than other forms of privacy issues (physical, territorial, work place, etc.).
- Majority of the participants felt passwords to be the most protected Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and then, financial information (bank, credit card details). In comparison to this, religion, mobile phone number, and health related information were rated as less protected PII.
- Privacy awareness about issues in public places was low. Participants were not aware of various privacy issues related to cameras in public places, and others taking pictures in public places.

- **Mobile Phones:**

- Mobile phones are becoming the next destination for storing private information. Participants stored personal information like passwords, credit card numbers, Permanent Account Number (PAN), PINs, etc. Privacy seems to be the primary concern for not storing personal information on the mobile phones for the rest.
- Majority of the participants felt comfortable with the protection provided by the mobile service providers.
- Most participants tend to delete the information on phone (e.g. contacts, messages, videos, audios, etc.) before discarding the devices.
- Privacy invasion through somebody specifically taking picture of the individual is of more concern than pictures / videos taken through CCTV and the likes.

- **Internet and Online Social Media:**

- About 40% of the participants would never save / share personal information in / through emails. Privacy seems to be the primary reason for this behavior.
- Survey participants were more aware about privacy policies and tend to read these policies more than the earlier study in 2004.
- Minority of the participants had “no privacy concerns” with online social networks. Majority of the participants felt pictures to be the most privacy invasive data on the OSNs.
- About 5% of the survey participants tend to accept friend requests from strangers or people whom they dont know, but just have common friends. This behavior seems to be same even with the third party applications.

- **Financial Privacy:**

- Participants were aware of privacy issues related to financial data; thanks to various financial frauds and thefts that has created the awareness.
- About 15% of the survey respondents felt that the credit cards should display personal information like name, date of birth, and phone number.

- About 80% of the survey respondents were aware of identity theft issue through credit cards.

- **Government:**

- Citizens have misinformed mental models of the privacy situation; e.g. Participants felt there were privacy laws where as there is no privacy law in India.
- About 17% of the survey participants said that personal information collected by UID and NATGIRD projects will not be misused.
- Trust in the government has reduced from 2004.