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**TECHNOLOGY USERS FAIL TO TAKE ADEQUATE STEPS
TO PROTECT THEIR PRIVACY IN DIGITAL SOCIETY
NEW RESEARCH SUGGESTS POSITIVE GUIDELINES
FOR TECHNOLOGY DESIGNERS THROUGH 'FACE-KEEPING'**

Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore and Washington DC (September 8, 2008) – In a time of technology that will soon be able not only to track someone's movements but predict them too, people are far too relaxed about protecting their privacy. Research, published by SAGE in the current special issue of *Social Science Information*, looks at cognitive technologies.

The research, described by social psychologist Saadi Lahlou, and other authors explored the combining of information technologies, with pervasive computing that will soon enable continuous monitoring of individuals, like what was imagined by 1984 author George Orwell. What Lahlou terms "the system" – the mass of interconnected data-collection devices from mobile phones, to internet sites, to surveillance cameras – can search, compare, analyze, identify, reason and predict the movements, motives and people's actions. And if several systems are combined, individuals stand little chance of being able to hide.

But while many users are concerned about privacy, Lahlou found that they are not taking appropriate measures to protect themselves or their data. The discrepancy is caused by the fact that social interaction using technologies specifically requires disclosure of personal data in order to get better or customized service. He proposes a new definition of privacy, something he calls "face-keeping," where the information presented (the "face" shown) is the one consistent with that particular situation.

"We are creating a system that will be aware of all that we do: when we turn on the washing machine, what we write and to whom, where we go and what we do there, what we buy and when, with whom and how we use it. The system will know more about us than we know about ourselves," Lahlou writes. "We believe a good system should always be on the user's side. Forcing system designers to consider the user's point of view in the construction of specifications is one more step in that direction."

The special September issue of *Social Science Information*, called "Cognitive Technologies," is being made available by SAGE at no charge for a limited time by emailing: mithu.mukherjee@sagepub.co.uk.

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