

This letter appeared in Research Magazine, November 2007....

Dear Editor

Your article about using surveillance footage for research purposes left me with deep concerns. Just putting up a sign saying people are being filmed does not mean they can be assumed to have given informed, open consent for the material to be used for research – logically it doesn't follow that not making an objection is tantamount to having given what the MRS Code of Conduct calls 'an agreement to participate'.

The article states that as a matter of fact many shoppers are operating on 'autopilot' anyway and may well not be paying attention, quite apart from those who simply don't see the signs, cannot understand them or are vulnerable. If consent cannot be properly obtained from participants then this material should simply not be used in reputable research.

Yours sincerely

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Note: Research Magazine is 'the leading magazine for the international market research industry' and can be accessed online at www.research-live.com