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Ipsos collaborates with Temple University on Face Mask Research

The collaboration will generate industry-relevant insights about attention, emotion, memory and desirability for marketing, advertising, financial decision making and more.

New York, January 27, 2022 — They say that the eyes are the windows to the soul. But when the rest of a face is hidden, how much can you really tell about how a person is feeling?

Since face masks became a part of daily life nearly two years ago, friends and strangers alike have needed to interpret facial expressions from the smallest slivers of skin. How well—and how quickly—can we recognize emotion when the lower half of someone's face is obscured?

These questions and more are being answered by the [Center for Applied Research in Decision Making \(CARD\)](#) at Temple University's Fox School of Business. Led by Vinod Venkatraman, center director and associate professor of marketing, CARD uses research to address real-world business problems in marketing, advertising, financial decision making and data privacy. The pioneering work at CARD offers practical insights about attention, emotion, memory and desirability using technologies like eye tracking, skin conductance, heart rate, fMRI and more.

Now, CARD is expanding its relationship with a key industry collaborator. Ipsos, a global market research company, recently signed a memorandum of understanding and gift agreement with the center to bring together rigorous research with practical problem-solving.

"Partnerships between academia and industry are the future of education," says Ron Anderson, dean of the Fox School and School of Sport, Tourism and Hospitality Management. "As a leader in market research, Ipsos brings industry relevance to CARD's research excellence."

Founded in 2008, CARD is one of the few neuroscience centers to be housed in a business school today. The research produced by the center touches everything from [decision making](#), [economic equality](#) and [political partisanship](#)—to [binging TV](#).



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“Academic and business partnerships are extremely valuable for both sides and the Temple-CARD relationship with Ipsos has been a model of their potential,” says Rich Timpone, the acting managing director of the Ipsos Global Science Organization. “Over the past several years, through this partnership we have explored foundational science questions in areas including how people make decisions, the role of emotions, and how to measure these in innovative ways, as well as the practical implications of these findings for industry, NGOs, and governmental decision making.”

The agreement offers both the center and the company the opportunity to better understand and apply data-driven insights. Research on face masks, for example, is something that continues to impact consumers’ everyday lives.

“Face masks have proven critical for reducing the spread of COVID-19 and saving lives,” says Venkatraman. “When you have part of the face covered, it’s harder to see the full range of emotion. We wanted to understand people’s perceptions of emotions, and how that impacts things like the customer experience in a business environment.”

To understand this, Venkatraman and his colleagues Craig Williams, Eisha Haque and Becky Mai [examined how face masks affect a person’s ability to read emotions](#). Over two experiments with nearly 500 participants, the researchers found that people could correctly identify emotions above chance when the lower half of a face was covered. However, they were also less likely—and slower—to correctly identify these expressions versus without masks. Using computational modeling, they show that people accumulated evidence about emotion more slowly with face masks.

“Our findings suggest that individuals may struggle to perceive masked expressions under time pressure, such as when they quickly pass other people in the grocery store or other brief interactions,” explains Williams, lead author of the study. “While individuals can still communicate emotion when masked, it may be more effective if people simply take their time.”

Using CARD’s academic research as a foundation, Ipsos’ Customer Experience team developed practical guidance for companies to create positive customer experiences while masked. Their white paper, [“Service with a Smile?”](#) outlines considerations for improving customer-employee interactions, including body language, eye contact, sound and environment.



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Jean-Francois Damais, Ipsos' Global Customer Experience Chief Research Officer, explained that with mask wearing likely here to stay, and for some considerable time yet, the research will help organizations create meaningful "masked moments" that encourage customers to return, spend and recommend. The research will also drive ROCXI, a "Return on CX Investment," while ensuring customers and staff stay safe.

The partnership between CARD and Ipsos exemplifies the Fox School's commitment to translational research. The exchange between industry and academia is critical to developing new ideas and creating knowledge for the benefit of the business community and beyond.

Venkatraman is excited about the future of CARD's relationship with Ipsos, in which he envisions the possibility of more sponsored projects, an academic advisory committee, workshops and more.

"Collaborations bring out the best of both sides," says Venkatraman. "With CARD's academic rigor and independence, and Ipsos' real-world expertise, we can give the business world the best we have to offer."

For more information about this partnership, please contact:

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ABOUT THE FOX SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

The vision of Temple University's Fox School of Business is to transform student lives, develop leaders, and impact our local and global communities through excellence and innovation in education and research.

The Fox School's research institutes and centers as well as 300+ full- and part-time faculty provide access to market-leading technologies and foster a collaborative and creative learning environment that offers more than curriculum—it offers an experience. Coupled with its leading student services, the Fox School ensures that its graduates are fully prepared to enter the job market.

The flexibility and responsiveness of our knowledge-creating research faculty allow the school to address the needs of industry and generate courses and programs in emerging fields. As a leader in business research, the Fox School values interdisciplinary approaches and translational research that influence and impact real-world problems. Our research informs an adaptive curriculum, supports innovation in teaching and prepares students for the ever-changing business environment.



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About Ipsos

Ipsos is the world's third largest Insights and Analytics company, present in 90 markets and employing more than 18,000 people.

Our research professionals, analysts and scientists have built unique multi-specialist capabilities that provide powerful insights into the actions, opinions and motivations of citizens, consumers, patients, customers or employees. Our 75 business solutions are based on primary data coming from our surveys, social media monitoring, and qualitative or observational techniques.

"Game Changers" – our tagline – summarizes our ambition to help our 5,000 clients to navigate more easily our deeply changing world.

Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos is listed on the Euronext Paris since July 1st, 1999. The company is part of the SBF 120 and the Mid-60 index and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD).

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