

Data Ethics Project Analysis

1. Introduction

This article focuses on an important ethical question: how companies collect and use people's personal data, especially when it comes to getting consent. This matters because there needs to be a balance between using modern technology, like personalized ads, and protecting people's privacy. If data is used in the wrong way, it can break trust, lead to privacy issues, and even cause harm. In the article, Author A supports stronger rules and clearer consent processes, saying that people should have more control over their data. Meanwhile, Author B takes a more relaxed view, saying that businesses should have some freedom to use data, as long as it helps users and follows basic privacy rules. These two views show different ways to deal with privacy and business needs in the digital world.

2. Author 1: Melinda Mills

Melinda Mills argues that collecting and sharing genetic data can make a big difference in public health, especially during pandemics or medical research. She believes that genetic data helps detect and prevent diseases early, and sharing this data worldwide can speed up health breakthroughs. Mills says that more people sharing their data can lead to new treatments, better vaccines, and more accurate tracking of diseases. She supports her view with the idea that using data in healthcare can save lives and help many people.

A moral principle that supports her view is utilitarianism, which means doing what brings the most benefit to the most people. Mills would likely agree with this idea because she focuses on how data sharing can improve public health. According to this principle, if data is used responsibly, the benefits for society — like better treatments and preventing diseases — are more important than the loss of some privacy. So, by combining this idea with her belief that data sharing helps public health, Mills concludes that it is both helpful and ethically acceptable.

3. Author 2: Jonas Sivelä

Jonas Sivelä takes a more cautious side. He thinks that collecting and widely sharing genetic data can be risky for people's privacy and freedom. He says that genetic information is very personal — it tells not only about a person, but also about their family and even future generations. He believes that even if the data is made anonymous, it can sometimes still be traced back to the person. That's why he argues that people should have strong control over their own data and that individual rights should come before public health goals.

The ethical principle behind Sivelä's argument is respect for autonomy, which means people should be able to decide what happens to their own data. He would support this idea because his main focus is on protecting people's privacy and choice. According to this principle, it's not right to use someone's genetic data without their clear consent — even if it might help public health. So, with this principle and his concern about data risks, Sivelä believes that large-scale genetic data sharing raises serious ethical concerns.

4. Evaluating the Principles

Mills – Utilitarianism

Reasonable Case:

Think of a health program that collects genetic data from people with a rare condition to develop new treatments. This helps those patients and also others with similar health problems. There might be a small privacy loss, but the benefits to public health are much bigger. This shows that utilitarianism supports data sharing when it helps many people.

Unreasonable Case (Problem):

Now imagine a company collects people's genetic data without asking and sells it to other companies. Even if the money is used for health research, utilitarianism might say it's okay. But this ignores the fact that people never agreed to share their data. This could break trust and harm future research efforts. It shows how utilitarianism can sometimes forget about individual rights when only focusing on the bigger picture.

Sivelä – Autonomy

Reasonable Case:

Imagine researchers ask people to donate their genetic data for a study. They explain everything clearly, and participants freely agree. This respects their choice and gives them control. It also protects their privacy and follows ethical rules.

Unreasonable Case (Problem):

Now think about a fast-spreading virus. Health experts want to use anonymous genetic data to stop it and make vaccines. But if they need to ask permission from every person, it could cause delays and risk more lives. In this case, following the autonomy principle too strictly could be harmful. It shows that this principle doesn't always work well in emergencies.

5. Conclusion

I believe that sharing genetic data for public health and research is okay — but only if people give clear consent and their privacy is strongly protected. We can find a fair way to help both the public and protect individuals' rights.

My view is based on these facts:

1. Genetic data has helped develop life-saving treatments and vaccines (like during COVID-19).
2. Making data anonymous helps reduce privacy risks, but it doesn't remove them completely.
3. Good rules and strict oversight can prevent misuse and make sure data is used for the right reasons.

The moral rule I support is a mix of beneficence and autonomy. This means doing what's best for society (beneficence) while also respecting people's rights to control their data

(autonomy). Data sharing is ethical when it brings real health benefits and when people understand and agree to how their data is used.

This principle avoids the problems of the earlier ones. In the case where data is sold without permission (problem with utilitarianism), it would be considered wrong. In emergencies where fast action is needed (problem with autonomy), it allows sharing — but only in responsible ways with protections.

This balanced approach gives a fair and ethical way to handle genetic data. It respects both the public good and personal privacy.