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THE ANXIETIES OF BIG DATA
BY KATE CRAWFORD

Kate Crawford's article "The Anxieties of Big Data" focuses on the manifestation of *surveillant anxiety* as part of the lived reality of big data. Anxiety pervades the present. In their 2014 manifesto "We Are All Very Anxious" British collective Plan C describe it as the dominant affect of modern late-stage capitalism. According to Crawford, data-driven anxieties plague both the surveiller and the surveilled, manifesting as the twin fears that "there can never be enough data" and of "standing out in the data." The response to the former has been for Big Data to expand its reach, while supplementing analysis with interdisciplinary tools drawn from the "small data" spheres of the social sciences and humanities. This trend is based in a neo-positivist worldview that equates data with truth. On the other side, and in reaction to this expanded surveillant gaze, the subjects of Big Data may attempt to blend in as a means of self-protection. An interesting manifestation of this desire to disappear is the *normcore* trend. For Crawford, the invention of *normcore* by trend forecaster K-Hole (and its subsequent mainstream adoption and modification) precisely represents a set of cultural anxieties that exist at the intersection of *mass surveillance* and *mass consumerism.* Yet, not everyone has the privilege of disappearing. Marginalized communities, already Othered, face the disciplinary brunt of surveillance practices. In the face of these deepening inequalities, Crawford asks us to consider how the broadly felt anxiety of living under Big Data might be transformed into radical acts of resistance.