Understanding Data and their Environment: Assessed Work (Essay)

**Essay Length:** Less than 1500 words excluding diagrams, tables, references, and appendices (if relevant).

**Deadline:** 23rd June 23:59

# Option 1: An discursive essay on privacy

## Title: “Privacy is dead” – Discuss

Considering the modern data environment, some in the technosphere such as Scott McNealy and Mark Zuckerberg have asserted that privacy is dead or outdated. Discuss this proposition, taking a position with reasoned commentary drawing on data, and/or expert opinion from the literature (traditional and/or grey) as appropriate.

### Distribution of the marks for the essay

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Area of Essay | % share of marks |
| Introduction | 10 |
| Analysis: quality of argument | 35 |
| Analysis: scope of research | 35 |
| Conclusion | 10 |
| Presentation: standard of English, overall coherence | 10 |

# Option 2: An analytical essay of the troubled families’ data situation.

Consider the following data situation:

As part of the troubled families programme, the UK government wishes to understand the complex nexus of issues that appear to co-occur in family units including deprivation, poor educational and health outcomes, underemployment and crime. It has created the troubled families dataset, which combines administrative data from multiple government departments and local authorities. This will allow it to track the trajectories of the identified families and measure whether specific interventions are effective.

It is considering allowing researchers to access (a version of) those data to carry out deeper analyses.

Your task is to assess the risk of this data situation and to recommend appropriate mitigations. You will need to consider ethical legal policy and technical issues inherent in the data situation.

You could approach this by applying the Anonymisation Decision-making Framework explicitly (perhaps completing the template and including it as an appendix) or you may simply want to draw on key elements of it. You do not have direct access to the data for this exercise so there are some things that you are not fully able to assess, but the report (see below) does give quite a lot of information about the scope and scale of the data.

Another approach is to describe the issues and principles that generally apply to the sharing of data, drawing on a wider literature and then apply those to the described data situation.

## Background information

You can find more information on the troubled families programme here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/troubled-families-programme-annual-report-published>

And about the dataset here:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/605185/Family_outcomes_-_national_and_local_datasets.pdf>

Indicative metadata for a potential dataset based on one researchers request can be found on blackboard. This is not a specification of a general access dataset but it should help guide your thinking about the type of dataset that might be in scope.

### Distribution of the marks for the essay

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Area of Essay | % share of marks |
| Introduction | 10 |
| Description of approach | 20 |
| Analysis of Troubled families case | 50 |
| Conclusion, implications/recommendation | 10 |
| Presentation: standard of English, overall Coherence | 10 |

# Relevant Reading

ACQUISTI, A., TAYLOR, C., & WAGMAN, L. (2016). The economics of privacy. *Journal of economic Literature*, *54*(2), 442-92.

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CNN MONEY (2010). *5 data breaches: From embarrassing to deadly*, available at: [http://tinyurl.com/CNN-BREACHES/](http://money.cnn.com/galleries/2010/technology/1012/gallery.5_data_breaches/) [accessed: 30/5/2016].

COHEN, J. E. (2012). What privacy is for? *Harvard Law Review*, *126*, 1904.

DE HERT, P., & PAPAKONSTANTINOU, V. (2016). The new General Data Protection Regulation: Still a sound system for the protection of individuals?. Computer law & security review, 32(2), 179-19

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EDWARDS, L., & VEALE, M. (2017). Slave to the algorithm: Why a right to an explanation is probably not the remedy you are looking for. *Duke Law & Technology Review*, *16*, 18.

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FLORIDI, L., & TADDEO, M. (2016). ‘What is data ethics?’, *Royal society* https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/full/10.1098/rsta.2016.0360

GERBER, N., GERBER, P., & VOLKAMER, M. (2018). Explaining the privacy paradox: A systematic review of literature investigating privacy attitude and behavior. *Computers & Security*, *77*, 226-261.

HARTZOG, W., & RICHARDS, N. M. (2019), Privacy's Constitutional Moment and the Limits of Data Protection *Boston College Law Review* 1687, Available at [http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3441502](https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3441502)

HAYNES, C. L., COOK, G. A., & JONES, M. A. (2007). Legal and ethical considerations in processing patient-identifiable data without patient consent: lessons learnt from developing a disease register; *Journal of Medical Ethics,* 33(5): 302–307, DOI:10.1136/jme.2006.016907.

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NISSENBAUM, H. (2004). “Privacy as contextual integrity”; *Washington Law Review*, 79 (119): 101-139, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/j8xut58>[accessed 5/1/2021].

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UK: INFORMATION COMMISSIONER’S OFFICE (2014b). *Conducting privacy impact assessments code of practice,* available at <http://tinyurl.com/ICO-PIA2>[accessed 30/5/2016].

UK: INFORMATION COMMISSIONER’S OFFICE (2016). *Guide to Data Protection version 2.4,* available at <http://tinyurl.com/ICO-DPG2-4>[accessed 30/5/2016].

WELLCOME TRUST (2016). *Public attitudes to commercial access to health data,* available at <http://tinyurl.com/zl2es5b>[accessed 19/6/2016]

ZIMMER, M. (2010). “But the data is already public”: on the ethics of research in Facebook. *Ethics and information technology*, 12(4), 313-325.

ZWITTER, A. (2014). “Big data ethics”, *Big Data & Society*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F2053951714559253>

# Some sources for commentary on confidentiality, privacy data protection etc.

<https://iapp.org/resources/article/privacy-links-and-blogs/>

<https://choosetoencrypt.com/privacy/16-privacy-and-cybersecurity-blogs-you-should-be-reading/>

<https://blog.feedspot.com/gdpr_blogs/>

<https://www.techopedia.com/10-quotes-about-tech-privacy-thatll-make-you-think/2/33713>