ACTIVITY 1
Data, Data, Data!

The ease with which data can be stored, cataloged, and searched in an ever more-connected society is an important point to understand. Data storage has both positive and negative implications, and being able to recognize these, as well as how your actions can contribute to the data being stored, are addressed in the following activity.

1. List two or three sites that you access on a regular basis. _____
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2. In your group, find the privacy policy for your given site and identify two or three pieces of information that are collected for users of the site.

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File Types

3. What does the word *delimited* mean? Why is this necessary when talking about data files?

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4. Given a data file, how can you determine the type of data that might be contained in a specific column?

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Posing Questions

5. On your own, identify two broad areas of interest that you have. Examples include health, sports, etc.

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6. For each of the two areas of interest you identified, determine one question to which you might want to know the answer. These should be questions that are not easily answered with an online search. Two examples of questions that are easy to answer with an online search are who won the 1998 Superbowl (The Denver Broncos), and what is the height of the world's tallest building (at the time of publication, Burj Khalifa, 2717 ft/828 m).

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Discuss your two questions with your partner and refine your questions based on their feedback. Write your updated questions below.

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Finding Data Sets

Your teacher will provide you with several sites that provide free access to data sets. Spend a few minutes looking at the sites.

7. Are there data sets that might apply to one of the two questions that you refined in question 6? Find two different data sets that might be used to answer one of your questions. List the site and any search criteria used to find the data sets. If not, consider revising one of your questions so that you can identify an applicable data set.

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8. How many records are in each of the data sets you identified? Describe one benefit of using a larger data set with more records.

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Check Your Understanding

9. With your partner, discuss one way that user data captured by a site (whether knowingly or unknowingly) has contributed to an improvement in the service provided. Have there been any positive impacts of this data outside of the service or website?

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10. Do you know how the data in the data set you identified was collected? If so, please describe. If not, describe one way that the data might have been collected.

11. In your opinion, are there situations where the benefit provided from the data collected is worth the risk to personal privacy? Why or why not?