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Data C104

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### Reading Notes 5

S. Igo, “Me and My Data,” *Historical Studies in the Natural Sciences* 4”

In this article, the writer, Sarah Igo explains how data has slowly moved from the capital of a company to the possession of individual people. Through examples like university student records, medical filings, and legal norms from the Freedom of Information Act, Igo emphasizes the important change of humanizing and individualizing data that we are going through in the modern world. As Igo explains, “There is now a broad conviction that personal information, whether biometric, biographical, or financial, might (best?) be treated as individually owned. That the notion rarely gets sustained scrutiny outside of specialist circles in intellectual property or privacy law may simply indicate how commonsensical this idea has become” (Igo). I’ve worked with data and data analytics for quite some time and a valuable lesson that I have learned is that each data point first and foremost is a story. I am heartened that is moving to a more individual perspective. People deserve to view their data. I would feel very uncomfortable if my medical data were out and available to the public for people to run analytics on.

C. Koopman, *How We Became Our Data: A Genealogy of the Information Person*

In this article, Koopman explores how data throughout history has changed perspectives. Whether it be about personal data, the concept of what a data point is has been defined and redefined throughout each generation of computation. The writer also goes into detail about how most data is used as control and deals with ideas like power. As the writer explains, “A surprising number (56%) also say they can share your information with the government or law enforcement in response to a “request.” Not a high bar court order, but something as easy as an “informal request.” Yikes -- that’s a very low bar! A 2023 rewrite of *Thelma & Louise* would have the ladies in custody before you’ve had a chance to make a dent in your popcorn. But seriously, car companies' willingness to share your data is beyond creepy. It has the potential to cause real harm and inspired our worst cars-and-privacy nightmares”. In connection to this class, we have explored what power means explicitly, but never really defined how it is used. Link Landgon winner, the writer expresses the need for data to be significantly more personal and for people to use and share data properly to protect the people whose information is at stake.