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Lab 1, Essay 1

Data vs. Information

Data would be meaningless without context. One huge database that controls a lot of my personal everyday life is social media databases. There is lots of data that help me use instagram in a smooth manner. To create the algorithms in my feed there must be data to support what I am seeing. There may be a collection of my contacts, my followers, who I follow, previous messages, comments, blocked users, previous searches etc. All of that information in their database connects together to help me see what I want where I want it. If the data of who I followed did not have context to it, and just listed their User IDs somewhere, then they may end up showing up under my recently searched and then everything I search could end up showing up in my daily feed. Whats worse is I could have everybody who blocked me or that I've blocked end up showing up as my friends if there is no context to that specific list of users. The data is the user ID that connects with what category it should go under (such as friend, follower, mutual, blocked).

Another reason that data is meaningless without context is that it could end up being a liability. If there is an extremely weak database and there is somehow a police investigation and the police need to access previous messages but there are unable to see who sent what message in a group chat/ direct message then they would be unable to find who is the victim in the situation. With the idea of "social media influencers" on the rise, it is important that their follower number is dictated properly to anybody who wants see it. When you have a certain

number of followers there are certain access points that you can reach on the app that other people cannot, such as live streaming. When celebrities use social media, they become verified so the stakeholders of instagram have more control over their account to prevent hackings and improv security of instagram promotions they may bring. If somebody such as Donald Trump or Obama was not a verified user in instagram's database system, then that could be an enormous problem to many Americans and people who follow those accounts to receive information. Cross referencing data through the systems is the only way to keep what we see when using the app accurate. It is most important to process the relationship between all the inputs of data to verify that everybody has a safe and productive experience when using social media.