

# In-Class Lab 4

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## **1. Does the illegal nature of the data collection and the release of private data taint the data in the release that was already publicly available?**

As it can be complex to distinguish between public and private data, especially given the vast amount of information available online, yes.

Apart from the ethical considerations, legal allegations, and data credibility issues due to the methods of obtaining data, the released 'private' data would probably be considered relatively free from sampling errors. Publicly available data might be influenced by specific interests, potentially biasing its representation.

## **2. Users of Patreon initially had an expectation of privacy, but that privacy no longer exists. Do researchers need to respect the intent or the reality?**

Since researchers need to consider not only whether they can use the data but also whether the data still meets the subject's expectations or intentions, ethically, we think if they could get consent from users, they could use this data to serve the public good concerning their consent. However, it is recognized that achieving this goal would pose significant challenges, requiring considerable time and financial resources.

Otherwise, considering the four principles of ethics (Respect for persons, Beneficence, Justice, Respect for law, and public interest) in research, it is not ethical to use the data. The availability of data does not indicate consent from the publishers. Applying the 'private' data to the research might result in better results. However, we consider respect for the original opinions of users on whether to release the data or not to be more important while conducting research.

## **3. Scholars and journalists share some functions in dealing with information and making it accessible to the public, but are the ethical considerations the same? If not, why not?**

Scholars typically research to advance knowledge within their field, often targeting academic or specialized audiences. Their work is often subject to peer review and academic scrutiny. In contrast, journalists serve the public interest by reporting news and information to a broader audience, often more focused on current events and issues. Their work is subject to editorial oversight and journalistic standards.

Both need to consider ethical issues carefully. On one hand, research can impact the long-term consequences, since research builds upon previous studies in similar fields, so ethical problems can influence not only researchers but the entire academic domain over time. On the other hand, journalistic context is given to the general audience instantly, i.e., providing immediate social impacts.

**4. Researchers will nearly always claim that their research will have a net public benefit and thus their methods are justified. Who gets to decide if that is accurate in any given case?**

No one can determine the accuracy of researchers' claims regarding the public benefit of their work. However, we can pursue more appropriate practices by establishing common ethical standards. This involves creating comprehensive rules that take into account various aspects of an issue and establishing communities tasked with peer review. Transparency throughout all procedures can ensure accountability and build trust within the research community and the broader public.

**5. Would you personally use the hacked data in this situation?**

No. Primarily, we strongly believe in adhering to ethical principles, particularly regarding privacy and consent. Even if the data could potentially result in valuable insights, it's essential to respect the rights and expectations of individuals whose data has been compromised.

Furthermore, as discussed above, using such data can impact the academic field in the long term, since it can be considered an approval of illegal data release for research purposes.