Cyber Security Policy and Research Institute

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Fact Sheet
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Big Data and Privacy

A report was released on May 1, 2014 reviewing the issues present in big data and privacy, the product of a 90-day review of the two topics led by Presidential Counselor John Podesta.

- Big data opens doors in many different fields of research. Some of these include: education, medical research, environmental monitoring/climate change impact modeling, agriculture, energy[1], and more.

- Due to the sheer volume of information that is stored, questions are raised regarding privacy and applicability of collection. Most notably, big data analytics can inadvertently disclose personal information depending on how the data is merged with other sets. It is for this reason (and others) that the review gave policy recommendations.

The recommendations:

- Expand on the Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights.

- Create and pass legislation concerning national data breaches.

- Privacy protections should be afforded to non-US citizens when the U. S. federal government handles any type of personally identifiable information (PII).

- When data is collected from students, devise methods to make sure that it is only used for education-related purposes.

- Properly amend the Electronic Communications Privacy Act, standardizing protection for web and digital content.

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[1] "FACT SHEET: Big Data and Privacy Working Group Review," The White House, May 1, 2014 (Source)