

information exists now. I think that is where I feel like taking off on my own opinion.

Mr. GALLAGHER. We hope you will, because that is what we are here to listen to.

Professor REICH. The first thing which seems to me basic about dossiers and the centralization of information is that information gets less reliable the further away it is from the source. I always use this as an axiom, a proposition that I would say is true all the time. Let me give you a college illustration to show what I mean.

When our freshmen come in the college, we have upper-classmen as counselors for them, and the counselors are supposed to show them around and tell them where the laundry is and where to go to find Vassar College, and so forth. It is generally a very helpful thing. Part of their duties as counselors is to write a report on each freshman, which goes in a file. They will say whatever comes into their heads about the freshman, that he is nice, that he is not nice, that he has a chip on his shoulder, whatever they feel is an accurate report. That is something between them and the dean's office at Yale College.

If this information gets into a file and stays there, it slowly changes from a reasonably accurate statement to something that could be a tremendous falsehood, because the freshman counselor disappears and we do not know any more who he is if we want to find him to ask him what he meant. The freshman may change. Perhaps he had a chip on his shoulder the first year, but after he got to like the place he got to be one of the nicest guys around. So, the information may no longer be true except as of the time that it was made. Other people reading this may understand it in other ways.

If that particular record, which serves ordinarily a good purpose, were to survive for 10 or 15 years, were it to become a part of other people's information, it seems to me it would become an untruth by the passage of time and by the distance from the source. Indeed, those who have looked at freshman records many years later are often shocked by the idea that they still exist, and wonder why they have not been destroyed.

That is my basic proposition about the development of inaccuracy, and it is my answer to the idea that this data center would be reliable. I do not think it would be reliable.

Freshman records are only something that happen between freshmen and their counselors. I would like to tell you a little about what happens between me and my students, because this is directly related to the data center. I get—and I am not unusual in this respect—all kinds of questionnaires about my students. I am supposed to fill them out and send them often to private people, but much more often to some Government agency. I take it this is the raw material, or some of it, out of which the computer center would have its supply.

For instance, here is the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare asking me about Student "X" whom I know reasonably well. It asks this kind of question: "How do you rate the applicant's relationships with other people? Consider such things as ability to work and get along with superiors and subordinates." Then it gives you answers. For example, you can check this one: "Mediocre. Wants to do things his own way more often than is desirable. Disliked by some associates. Somewhat lacking in tact. Becomes sullen when criticized.