

A statistical information system produces information that does not relate to the individual. It only identifies characteristics that relate to groups of individuals or populations. It has as its purpose answering such questions as these: What proportion of the residents of Appalachia possess income less than \$3,000? In what way does the mix of economic activities in New York City differ from Chicago? What activities seem to figure prominently in recent rapid growth of the Southeast, Florida, the gulf coast, and the Boston-Washington corridor? What proportion of the registered voters turned out in a recent primary and how were they divided between Republican and Democrat, urban and rural, white and nonwhite?

These are just illustrations but emphasize the range of the questions, which is infinite.

This is sufficient to emphasize that a statistical system is busy generating aggregates, averages, percentages and so forth that describe relationships. No information about the individual is generated.

No information about the individual needs to be available to anyone under any circumstances for the statistical information system to perform its function.

This distinction, it seems to me, divides the issue of personal privacy into two parts. The first part of the issue is reflected in this question: Can a statistical information system be developed and administered in a way that assures that it cannot be used as an intelligence system? I think the answer is an unqualified "Yes." That this can be done and done successfully there is no doubt. It has been done and done successfully for many years for those files that constitute the records of the Bureau of the Census. We don't have to speculate about possibility. We have demonstrated the possibility.

Let's see wherein this protection does exist and the ways in which it can be extended.

The protections are of two broad types: (a) those that stem from the design and technical characteristics of the system, and (b) those established by statutory and other legal restrictions prohibiting the release of individual data.

I think that it should be emphasized that such statutory restrictions do exist, as has been emphasized here previously. The statutory regulations governing the census files are a case in point. They have existed for a long time. They have worked well to prohibit illegal disclosure of individual data to anyone, and this includes the President of the United States. The details of the legal provisions in this area and their history are sufficiently complex that I am not qualified to review them, but Dr. Bowman here and the men on his staff and men on the staff of the Census Bureau can elaborate on this subject.

These legal prohibitions are supplemented by a formidable array of procedures embodied in the design of a statistical system and inherent in modern technology.

These legal provisions constitute the following:

The lay or public image of such a system is one of an automated monster with everybody's records that can be instantaneously retrieved by pressing buttons. There seems to be no awareness that the same technology that projects this frightening image has characteristics that can be and are utilized effectively to protect the sanctity of the individual record. Let me indicate some of the ways.