

ing the information feel that other Government agencies might have access to such information and use it against them. For this reason the Census Bureau has had written into the law confidentiality restrictions which prevent the disclosure of census information to any other parts of the Government or to private users. Thus, for example, the Internal Revenue Service cannot get even the names and addresses of those included in a census. Unfortunately, not all Government agencies are so circumspect concerning the information they obtain from individuals, and State and local governments provide even less protection of information.

Recently, for instance, the New York Times cited the case of the New York State government selling the names and addresses of 6,400,000 motor vehicle owners to marketing services for a sum of \$86,000. There are many examples of other abuses by all levels of government, but perhaps what concerns individuals most is the existence or use of secret files about them within government, containing unverified and often erroneous information.

Although the emphasis in the privacy hearings was mainly on the possible danger of centralizing records, they also brought out that in some instances the centralization of files can result in increasing the protection of individual privacy in situations where there have been flagrant abuses. For example, New York State is currently setting up a central identification and intelligence system. Before the establishment of the centralized system, there were some 70 million files in the various agencies of criminal justice in New York. These related to police departments, prosecutors, criminal courts, and probation, correction, and parole agencies, all of whom dealt with individuals who came within the jurisdiction of the law. They include of course local agencies as well as those of the State government. In all, some 3,600 agencies were involved, of which over 600 were police department. Under the decentralized system of duplicate files, the cost of maintaining the files was very great, and there was for the most part no agreement as to the kind of evidence which it was proper to maintain in the files.

In many cases useful information could not be brought to bear upon a pressing problem. The files often were barren of material they should contain, and instead were a collection of newspaper clippings loose notes, unverified and irrelevant information. Violation of files was frequent. Police reporters looking for a good story were given free access to files on suspects, and as a result were able to publish in the newspaper some interesting but in many cases misleading, irrelevant, and damaging pieces of information. Those police chiefs who tried to protect the confidentiality of their files received poor press treatment, so that they would be encouraged to cooperate with the press more fully in the future.

With the establishment of the statewide identification and intelligence system, one of the first steps was to define what material should be contained in the basic system. Unreliable and inadmissible evidence was excluded. Each agency contributing information was given the right to specify what other agencies should be allowed access to that information. Each administrative unit in the system has access only to that kind of information in the central file which it has been agreed in advance is proper. The intelligence system, furthermore, keeps a record