

First of all, it said very little about the issue of personal privacy. This now stands revealed as a gigantic oversight for which the author takes full responsibility. For anyone who views this report and this issue from a perspective outside of the Federal statistical system, this oversight must seem incomprehensible. The reason is very simple, if inexcusable. In preparing this report it was addressed, in terms of its subject matter, to improvements in the servicing capability of the Federal statistical system and, in terms of its audience, to the members of the administrative family engaged in the activities of that system and thoroughly knowledgeable about its characteristics. Consequently, it was assumed that the protection of personal privacy was a given condition that was understood by everyone concerned. This was thought justified in dealing with such an audience because legal and procedural protections against revealing information about individuals have been a very basic part of the operation of the Federal statistical programs for many many years! Furthermore, these protections have been phenomenally successful! The protection of personal privacy has long been an obsession with the directors of federal statistical programs because the success of these programs have always depended upon cooperation of the respondents who supply information. No successful statistical program could exist without full confidence that personal privacy was secured!

The second big omission, stemming from the nature of the report and its audience, was the failure to distinguish clearly between statistical information systems on the one hand and intelligence systems on the other. This distinction was introduced in testimony before the Gallagher Committee.

The distinction is basic. *Intelligence systems* generate data about individuals as individuals. They have as their purpose "finding out" about the individual. They are widespread and common and essential in our private and public business. They include such things as the medical records a doctor keeps to trace the changes in the well-being of his patient and the educational records the teacher keeps to trace the progress of a student. They include requirements essential to public administration, such as the results of tests by driver licensing authorities concerning vision or tax information needed by the tax authorities.

A *statistical* information system produces information that does not relate to the individual. It only identifies characteristics that relate to groups of individuals or so-called "populations". It has as its purpose answering such questions as these. "In what way does the mix of economic activities in New York City differ from that of Chicago?" "What proportion of the registered voters turned out in a recent primary and how were they divided between Republicans and Democrats, urban and rural, white and nonwhite?" The range of the questions is infinite.

The important point to emphasize is that a statistical system is concerned with generating aggregates, averages, percentages, etc. that describe relationships characteristic of groups or populations of individuals. No information about the individual is generated as output and no information about the individual needs to be available to anyone outside the system under any circumstances for the statistical information system to perform its function.

This distinction 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? The author is sure that the answer is yes.

Here the distinction between the short-run and the long-run comes particularly into play. We have seen that the coordinating requirements in the statistical system often will require reformulation of programs in the production of data. Thus, over a period of some years a modification of the system will have to proceed with only those limited subsets of all conceivable existing files that are relevant to the most urgent policy requirements. Consequently they will deal mostly with traditional statistical records that have contained information dealing largely with the public face of the individual (such things as the demographic characteristics like age, race, sex, etc.) in contrast to the private face of the individual (such things as criminal records, medical records, psychological tests, etc.). There is nothing in sight in the short-run future that would change the scope or content of such general-purpose data or their organization in any way contrary to the existing tradition of protecting personal privacy. In the future as the system evolved in scope and effectiveness it would be possible to extend the legal and procedural protections against the misuse of a statistical system for intelligence purposes. Computer technology cuts two ways. It provides us with new and powerful techniques for controlling and protecting the misuse of the record.