

often our thinking becomes trapped in this oversimplification. The conflict, in the end, is between conflicting aspects of our own individual personal interests. Law enforcement, behavioral research, freedom of the press and effective government enlarge some of our personal freedoms through the instrument of at least partially restricting others. The problem, of course, is that we have never devised a way, in a free society, to allow every individual an unrestricted choice in his market basket of freedoms and still maintain the viability of the society upon which all freedoms depend.

It is not proposed that the problem of establishing a socially acceptable balance in this area of information and personal privacy is necessarily of the same order of importance as all other conflicts of interest. The instinct of the Congressional committees and of the public is correct. The question of how to develop information and how to use it is without a doubt one of the most vital of all public issues. Information is power. But both information and power are morally neutral—each has the ability to enslave and to release.

Here on the most general and philosophic plane we have the issue restated. In the final analysis what are the benefits to be derived from improved information systems? The stake is our success as a nation in our complex world. The future of mankind is bound up in the accumulation and effective use of pertinent information. In our case, if there is any critical deficit, it is in the realm of information that will serve society's need to establish policy and manage its public affairs.

But if the stake is large, so is the risk. The risk is the dehumanization of man; or perhaps, put more accurately, that we shall fail in our long-term effort to become fully humanized.

This brings us to a critical point. In the end, the important thing is not that we must strike an operative balance in solving these problems, as we will and must. The important thing is what standards serve as our guide as we attempt to strike the balances and restrike them every day and year. What is it that motivates our purpose? Which will be the dominant ethic—if you will? The author would wish every decision in the generation and application of new knowledge to be governed by the contribution it can make to provide every man with the best chance for the realization of his human potential. This same point of view is very likely motivation behind Congressional interest in this issue. Their legitimate concern is to find ways in which this motive can be supported.

In short, the issue of personal privacy is really only part of the larger and more fundamental issue: How can information, which is really the codification of all human knowledge, be made to serve the goal of national development and human enrichment. In this context the long range evolution of statistical systems is seen to be essential to the achievement of these goals.

In closing, the thesis presented here has these essential elements.

(1) We are engaged in discussing a public issue that is of the greatest importance to the future of our society. The emerging prospects of better and more useful information systems hold great promise for human welfare. They also contain the possibility of misuse if not guided by an appropriate social ethic and safeguarded from improper violation of constitutional rights. Neither proposition can be honestly denied.

(2) The legitimacy of these concerns is current and immediate. Intelligence systems already exist and are already compiling records of misuse. This potential abuse can grow rapidly even in the short-run. We obviously need to turn as quickly as we can to establish policy and protections in this area.

(3) It is unnecessary and unfortunate if we identify the prospects for more rational utilization of existing statistical resources with this personal privacy issue in the short-run. The short-run choices are not painful or excessively dangerous. There is at least a decade or more in which we can work to effect an internal rationalization of these resources and serve policy and management better without running the risk of creating an instrument with great potential for the invasion of privacy. We need to get on with the task because of its importance for public welfare and because in the exercise of this effort we have the best chance for developing the extended protections we must develop as an adjunct of all future information systems.

(4) We must somehow commit resources immediately to the task of developing the techniques for safeguarding human rights as we exploit the great advantages of our new technology and as we take up the task of thinking through a national information policy. Not only do we need to engage the effort of leaders in the scientific community we must provide for the initiation of a new kind of technical staff work.