cies, and more the collection in two surveys or reports of data that could be collected in one. Failure to make the maximum use of each occasion for collecting information may well lead to a burden on respondents which becomes intolerable with growing needs for data. An example of the problem is provided by current practice in connection with sample data on retailing. The Bureau of the Census collects data on retail sales from one sample of retail stores and the Bureau of Labor Statistics collects data on employment, wages, and hours from another. As a result, there are doubts about the comparability of these input and output data at various levels of publication detail. These doubts arise not so much from the differences in the two samples as from differences in the two Bureaus' methods of assigning industry codes and definitions of reporting units. If both input and output data were collected on the same report form and processed by the same agency, these differences in comparability would be eliminated. This situation applies not only to retail sales but also to manufacturing data, where the Bureau of the Census collects monthly figures on sales, orders, and inventories, while the Bureau of Labor Statistics surveys manufacturing employment, man-hours, and wages each month. There is little doubt that a single consolidated reporting system, using one sample, would be both less burdensome, and less costly, and yield better information.

The second source of inefficiency is failure to use as a statistical resource all the information potentially available in the data collected. This, in turn, has a number of sources. (1) Collection of the data on the same reporting units by different collecting agencies operating with different classification systems, unit definitions, and the like, results in inability to match all the relevant available information on a responding unit for analytical purposes. Information on groups of respondents of different, and to some extent imperfectly known, composition cannot properly be compared and correlated. Census, IRS, SEC, and FTC data on business enterprises exemplify this problem. These incompatibilities in definition often reflect the different purposes of the several agencies that collect the data; yet effort directed to resolving these problems can be fruitful and is worthwhile. (2) After separate collecting and processing, agencies assemble data in summary form; the original individual reports are all but unavailable for further use, or available only at prohibitive costs. This effectively prevents different summaries and analyses of the data for other purposes by the same agency or by different agencies. In particular, the efficient use of data for intertemporal comparisons over any but a short time period becomes difficult, as the classifications change over time, and thus much information is irretrievably lost. (3) Confidentiality restrictions as interpreted by different agencies often act as a barrier to the full use of data for statistical purposes inside the government and within the legal boundaries of use.

The third source of inefficiency is that many of the smaller agencies operate on too small a scale to make fully efficient use of modern techniques, professional specialists, and economical large-scale machines. Only further centralization, rather than better coordination, can cure this situation.

The degree of decentralization in the system, and its predominant orientation toward publication as a means of making information available, correspond to a now-obsolete technology of handling and storing information, as well as to a much lower level of demand for detailed quantitative demographic, economic, and social information by policy-making agencies of all levels of government. Our present organization and mode of operation does not take advantage of modern information processing technology, and is not capable of meeting the variety and scale of present day information needs. The deficiencies of the system, and the gap between what it can provide and what would be technically possible under appropriate organizational arrangements will grow rapidly in the near future. As we have already pointed out, the demand for detailed quantitative information will continue to increase at a high rate. Further, the nature of the demand is changing in qualitative terms in ways that are only just becoming clear. The degree of disaggregation now demanded in the data relevant to economic policy has changed greatly in the last decade, even though the policy continues to focus on objectives stated in terms of such aggregate magnitudes as employment, unemployment, output, and the general wholesale and consumer price indices. The demand for comprehensive micro-data will grow explosively as policy becomes increasingly concerned with the micro-effects of the economic system, in terms of particular localities, income, and occupational, age and ethnic groups; as policy instruments become increasingly capable of sensitive and selective application to particular needs, and include a broader range of government actions in such areas as education, research, health, housing, transportation, and resource development. Further, the need for coordination of data collected