

## Big Data and the Bigger Picture

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### Abstract

In 1972, New York passed the Controlled Substances Act which allowed the state to collect personal information about which individuals were prescribed drugs that were deemed high priority on the illegal market. The case *Whalen v. Roe* was one of the first recorded instances to investigate this issue and truly analyze the legality of mass data collection. Fast forward 40 years and data has only become a larger part of everyday life for anyone uses a computer, cell phone, or even visits their local pharmacy. Companies love collecting high volumes of data because it allows them to analyze human behaviors and trends to optimize their businesses. Fashion companies, grocery stores, government agencies, insurance companies, and many more organizations desire information about their constituents for varying reasons. This mass collection of data is termed "Big Data". Big Data has become a popular and controversial topic in the news. The two real-life stories below clarify a valid argument for each side.

Elderly Richard Guthrie answered his phone to an insurance company to discuss ways to save on his life insurance plan. The next day when Richard went to the bank, he discovered his money was gone. What happened was that Richard's frequent entry into online sweepstakes gave criminals access to his information, allowing them to pose as life insurance agents and hack his accounts. In opposition, IBM is creating a Big Data Analytics Platform to enhance government agencies ability to predict and prevent real time crime. Their plan suggests uncovering suspicious relationships between people, events, and transactions to tenfold increase general safety.

The case and examples above bring up an interesting question to the benefit of collecting data versus the potential privacy and security risks. This paper defines Big Data, references current matters in society surrounding Big Data, and examines existing legal statutes and regulations. These legal issues are used to help predict the future of Big Data and set expectations for society and the government as time progresses. As technology is changing, it is critical the courts continually analyze and question the precedents set for Big Data collection. The paper presents the Big Picture in regard to Big Data.

**Keywords:** Big Data, Privacy, Data Collection, Technology, Corporations, Hacking.

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