

Big Data: Dilemmas and interest groups

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Many examples: here I look at Govt admin data

- Prepared by govt departments and key issue is linking across depts
- Encouraged by Digital Economy Act (2018) via ONS in England

Who are the interest groups?

1. Government:
joined up policymaking by linkage
Surveillance
2. Privacy advocates
obvious breaches and anti excessive surveillance
No obvious concern with research use
3. Researchers:
Current lock down for access only via 'secure havens' makes good research difficult
4. Commercial interests:
Similar to research but with a vested interest in not sharing results in public interest

Can (and should) these conflicting interests be reconciled?

- Full reconciliation not easy.
- Partly achieved via use of *synthetic data*
- These retain statistical structure of data so can be used by data analysts for modelling but totally non-disclosive. Can be used by Govt analysts for coordinated policy making.
- Reconciles privacy and research and so long as real data are secure, reduces surveillance possibilities.
- Needs a Parliamentary body, independent of executive, with resources and teeth to monitor collection and use of data.