


Judged by the Tin Man: Individual Rights in the Age of Big Data



Omer Tene & Jules Polonetsky
The Technology of Privacy
Silicon Flatirons Center
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Dangerous side effect of common drug combination discovered by data mining

BY KRISTA CONGER

A widely used combination of two common medications may cause unexpected increases in blood glucose levels, according to a study conducted at the [Stanford University School of Medicine](#), [Vanderbilt University](#) and [Harvard Medical School](#). Researchers were surprised at the finding because neither of the two drugs — one, an antidepressant marketed as Paxil, and the other, a cholesterol-lowering medication called Pravachol — has a similar effect alone.

The increase is more pronounced in people who are diabetic, and in whom the control of blood sugar levels is particularly important. It's also apparent in pre-diabetic laboratory mice exposed to both drugs. The researchers speculate that between 500,000 and 1 million people in this country may be taking the two medications simultaneously.

The researchers' study relied on an adverse-event reporting database maintained by the U.S.



Russ Altman



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Big data is our generation's civil rights issue, and we don't know it

What the data is must be linked to how it can be used.

by [Alistair Croll](#) | [@acroll](#) | [+Alistair Croll](#) | [Comments: 17](#) | August 2, 2012



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Data doesn't invade people's lives. *Lack of control over how it's used does.*

What's really driving so-called big data isn't the volume of information. It turns out big data doesn't have to be all that big. Rather, it's about a reconsideration of the fundamental economics of analyzing data.

For decades, there's been a fundamental tension between three attributes of databases. You can have the data fast; you can have it big; or you can have it varied. The catch is, you can't have all three at once.



**A LEGAL THEORY
FOR
AUTONOMOUS
ARTIFICIAL AGENTS**

SAMIR CHOPRA and LAURENCE F. WHITE

Germany's Former First Lady Sues Google For Defamation Over Autocomplete Suggestions



FREDERIC LARDINOIS 

Friday, September 7th, 2012

17 Comments



When you search for “**Bettina Wulff**” on Google, the search engine will happily autocomplete this search with terms like “escort” and “prostitute.” That’s obviously not something you would like to be associated with your name, so the wife of former German president Christian Wulff has now, according to Germany’s **Süddeutschen Zeitung**, decided to sue Google for defamation. The reason why these terms appear in Google’s autocomplete is that there have been persistent rumors that Wulff worked for an escort service before she met her husband. Wulff categorically denies that this is true.

DIGITAL DOMAIN

The Algorithm Didn't Like My Essay

By RANDALL STROSS

Published: June 9, 2012

AS a professor and a parent, I have long dreamed of finding a software program that helps every student learn to write well. It would serve as a kind of tireless instructor, flagging grammatical, punctuation or word-use problems, but also showing the way to greater concision and clarity.



Skip Sterling


Now, unexpectedly, the desire to make the grading of tests less labor-intensive may be moving my dream closer to reality.

The standardized tests administered by the states at the end of the school year typically have an essay-writing component, requiring the hiring of humans to grade them one by one. This spring, the [William and Flora Hewlett Foundation](#) sponsored a competition to see how well algorithms submitted by professional data scientists and amateur statistics wizards could predict the scores assigned by human graders. [The winners were announced](#) last month — and the predictive algorithms were eerily accurate.


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By JENNIFER VALENTINO-DEVRIES, JEREMY SINGER-VINE and ASHKAN SOLTANI

It was the same Swingline stapler, on the same Staples.com website. But for Kim Wamble, the price was \$15.79, while the price on Trude Frizzell's screen, just a few miles away, was \$14.29.

A key difference: where Staples seemed to think they were located.

A Wall Street Journal investigation found that the Staples Inc. website displays different prices to people after estimating their locations. More than that, Staples appeared to consider the person's distance from a rival brick-and-mortar store, either OfficeMax Inc. or Office Depot Inc. If rival stores were within 20 miles or so,

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