1993

PANEL 10 PRIVACY AND ACCURACY ISSUES FOR INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN THE 1990s AND BEYOND

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PANEL 10

PRIVACY AND ACCURACY ISSUES FOR INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN THE 1990s AND BEYOND

Panel Chair: **Michael Bieber**, New Jersey Institute of Technology[1]

Panelists: **Roger Clarke**, Australian National University
Nanette Ditosto, U.S. Council on International Business
Rob Kling, University of California at Irvine
Peggy O'Rourke, U.S. Internal Revenue Service

As the power and interconnectivity of technology advances, ethics increasingly becomes a thorn wedged in the side of information systems. The dilemma between protecting individual rights and promoting the "common good" (societal or commercial) applies to our field, perhaps more than others, as it is the technology under our purview that makes collection and dissemination of personal data so easy. Computer networks enable the flow of vast amounts of data among corporate and governmental entities, both domestically and across borders. Decisions from credit approval, to hiring, to criminal justice, to simply the impression one makes on others may be based in part or entirely on computerized files. Such decision making often is sensible, practical and responsible; yet cases of errors and abuse exist. Few agree upon how to safeguard data accuracy and an individual's right to privacy in a cost-effective manner, much less to which degree such concern is even warranted. Both corporate and national cultures contribute to protection policies.

SELECTED ISSUES

- How should we balance an individual's right to privacy against the right of a business to conduct reasonable commercial activities or the need for a governmental agency to support a reasonable societal interest? Do we have different expectations of privacy for businesses and government?

- Which mandates and standards for privacy and accuracy do businesses and governmental agencies have? Have these changed with increasing technological sophistication and public awareness? How are these likely to change in the near future?

- Is privacy a purely American concern? What insights can we draw from how other countries deal with these issues? Are there special implications for multinational organizations?

- Can standards, policies and "solutions" be market-driven (and presumably cost-justified), or must they be legislated? How much damage must be demonstrated before strong action is warranted? Are technologically-illiterate legislators able to determine appropriate and feasible policies?

PROCESS

We will begin with a small number of questions to frame the issues and draw out the panelists' viewpoints. After this initial discussion we will invite audience participation.

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[1]The chair wishes to thank New York University's Department of Information Systems for its support in organizing this panel.