

Data Mining – A discussion lead by Adrian. 2/10/09

Please read 5.9 in Quinn (p255-260).

1. Is data mining intrinsically unethical?
2. Is the selling of databases with personal information unethical?
3. Do you have a right to information about a transaction you have proceeded with?

Please read the following articles. Note: some may require you to register online with the NYTimes for free. If you really don't want to register, please email me (kostruba@) and I can send you a pdf copy of the articles.

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C06E7DE133EF934A15756C0A9629C8B63&sec=&spon=&emc=eta1>

4. Is it ethical for the government to be using private sector databases for data mining? Governmental or public sector databases?
5. Is it ethical for agencies to data mine with personally identifiable information without a court order? With a court order?
6. Does it matter what the ultimate purpose of the data mining is with regards to ethicality?

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/20/business/yourmoney/20compute.html>

7. Is Google saving your search data to present you with more relevant ads unethical?

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/09/washington/09fbi.html>

8. Is data mining on a suspected terrorist's "community of interest" ethical?
9. It is ethical for telecommunications companies to give the FBI this sort of information? Without telling its customers that this could happen?

http://www.wired.com/science/discoveries/magazine/16-07/pb_theory. Feel free to further explore some of the other short articles listed on the left side under the heading "the end of theory." (Most of these articles are only about 3 paragraphs long and rather interesting).

10. Given that "correlation is not causation," is the old approach to science, "hypothesize, model, test," outdated with the new enormous data sets available?
11. Is correlation really enough? How useful is it to know that a new species exists without knowing anything about it?