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“Big Data,” big regulations, and big ethics

By Robert Bond

Data knows no jurisdictional boundaries, nor restrictions on international data transfers, so it seems odd that in 2023 we are still debating regulations that seek to control transfers of personal data.

We should have reached a point where the need to respect personal information, keep data secure, and enable trust becomes not only a focus for regulators and an expectation for citizens but also a compliance and ethical duty for governments and businesses.

For thousands of years, governments and other authorities have collected information on citizens in various ways. Statistical information about people has been valuable for managing economies and humanitarian needs. More recently, however, technological advances have meant personal data can be collected, obtained, analyzed, used, transferred, and shared in myriad ways—some good and some bad.

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