

# “Dead Data”

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## Abstract

Discussions of privacy, data and the consequences technology might have for peoples' lives often focus on the high-profile. We discuss Google or Microsoft's latest multi-petabyte data store, or Facebook's deep user records; we inquire into the security of medical records, addresses, financial information. But what is private or public - what creates risk, or doesn't - is often contextual. Safe information to disclose for one person is sensitive for another, and not in ways easily captured by universal approaches to privacy in engineering. What do those more humdrum situations look like, and how do we protect against them?

In this talk, I will explore how otherwise-innocuous data can create vulnerability and open up space for harm, in ways that are difficult to simply engineer around and cross vast ranges of space and time. Drawing on examples from trans, black and/or immigrant lives, I will illustrate the consequences not just of big data but *dead data* - information long-since thought gone - and explore ways that engineers handling data can think about protecting particularly-vulnerable users of their services.

## Bio

Os Keyes is a researcher and writer based at the University of Washington, USA, where they study gender, technology and (counter)power. Current projects cover facial recognition, critical tactics for technology, and the consequences of classification for trans lives. They are the inaugural recipient of an Ada Lovelace Fellowship, and have been published in Slate, Real Life, Logic, and Scientific American.