Lecture 6-1
Privacy and the Government
Participation Quiz

Do you think there should be more women in Computer Science?

a) No, I think things are right the way they are
b) Meh, I don't really care
c) Yes, but I don't think much can be done about it
d) Yes, and I think we should do something about it
Solove’s Taxonomy of Privacy

• Privacy can become an issue in four different ways:
  – Information collection: gathering personal information
    • “How much information do I have to give to rent a car?”
  – Information processing: storing, manipulating, and using information that has been collected
    • “Should Google use the content of my emails to target ads to me?”
  – Information dissemination: spreading personal information
    • “Is it wrong to forward an email that was sent to me?”
  – Invasion: intruding upon a person’s daily life
    • “Is it a good idea to email professors you might be interested in working with in grad school? How many: 2, 10, 100, 1000?”
Public Records: Statutory Disclosures

• Census
  – Purpose: ensure that seats in Parliament are apportioned correctly
  – Worry: this data may also be used for other purposes
  – Concern over the long-form census

• Revenue Canada
  – Intentional disclosure (rogue employees)
  – Unintentional disclosure (lost laptops)

...how worried should we be about the existence of such records?
Privacy and the Government

“The government should create a database identifying the DNA of every resident and make it available to medical researchers and police.”
Data Mining

• Data mining
  – Searching for patterns or relationships in one or more databases
  – This info typically provided by the customer for another purpose

• Many internet services are essentially provided as an opportunity to gather valuable data
  – Google; Facebook; free online courses

• Also performed by the government
  – Efforts to detect terrorism via phone, bank, travel records
  – Tax audits

• Questions:
  – Ownership: do you have any rights over information arising from transactions in which you participated?
  – Ethics: what data mining activities are unethical? Which are ethical?
  – Does it make a difference whether DM is opt-in or opt-out?
  – At what point does DM become “creepy”?
  – Should we worry about ending up in a “personalization bubble”?