

UCLA

Presentations

Title

Big Data and Little Data Across the Disciplines

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5tq7c5hq>

Author

Borgman, Christine L.

Publication Date

2015-03-13

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Big Data and Little Data Across the Disciplines

Christine L. Borgman
Professor & Presidential Chair in Information Studies
University of California, Los Angeles
Christine.Borgman@ucla.edu
<http://www.christineborgman.info>

Claremont Graduate University

13 March 2015

Big data offer a wealth of research opportunities across the scholarly disciplines. Little data similarly offer depth of investigation within and between fields. However, having the right data is usually better than having more data. Enthusiasm for data-driven research is obscuring the complexity and diversity of data in scholarship and the challenges for stewardship. Data practices are local, varying from field to field, individual to individual, and country to country. Inside the black box of *data* is a plethora of research, technology, and policy issues. Data are best understood as representations of observations, objects, or other entities used as evidence of phenomena for the purposes of research or scholarship. Rarely do they stand alone, separable from software, protocols, lab and field conditions, and other context. Concerns for data sharing and open access raise questions about what data to keep, what to share, when, how, and with whom. Open data is sometimes viewed simply as releasing data without fees. In research contexts, open data may pose complex issues of licensing, ownership, responsibility, standards, interoperability, and legal harmonization. Agreements on these and many other aspects of data are required, both to share and to reuse them. To scholars, data can be assets, liabilities, or both. To librarians, data also are scholarly products to curate for future users. However, data are much more difficult to manage than publications. This talk, based on the book *Big Data, Little Data, No Data: Scholarship in the Networked World*, will explore the stakes and stakeholders in research data and the challenges facing scholars, students, librarians, funding agencies, policy makers, publishers, and the public.

[Christine L. Borgman](#), Professor & Presidential Chair in Information Studies at UCLA, is the author of more than 200 [publications](#) in information studies, computer science, and communication, including three books published by the MIT Press. *Big Data, Little Data, No Data: Scholarship in the Networked World* (January 2015), follows [Scholarship in the Digital Age: Information, Infrastructure, and the Internet](#) (2007) and [From Gutenberg to the Global Information Infrastructure: Access to Information in a Networked World](#) (2000), winners of the [Best Information Science Book of the Year](#) award from the American Society for Information Science and Technology. She is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and of the Association for Computing Machinery, a member of the Board of Directors of the [Electronic Privacy](#)

[Information Center](#), and U.S. Co-Chair of the CODATA-ICSTI Task Group on Data Citation and Attribution.