

# The Concurrently Companion



## Episode 34: Data privacy, big tech, and human value

### Topic introduction

Kelsey and Jonathan respond to a listener request for help exploring why we should not sell our private data. What makes our data valuable? And why should we work to protect it?

### Discussion

*Key terms: data, value, power, image-bearer, online living, TikTok, objective vs subjective/relative, utilitarian, transactional, transcendent, the internet of things*

### Questions

What are we talking about when we talk about data? Categories from the episode: personal information, unique identifiers, activity, location, publicly accessible sources.

Make some value statements about things in your room, your home, or your life in general. Evaluate: Are these *objectively* or *subjectively/relatively* valuable?

What makes data so valuable that we would be careful with it? How does personhood (or image-bearing) connect with value?

What worldview(s) treat value in a utilitarian or transactional way? What worldview(s) have a definition of value that keeps the transcendent in view?

How is defining a person's value according to a utilitarian view destructive? How does this type of thinking work to damage? What is damaged?

How could data be used for evil by other individuals, companies, political entities, etc.

How might entities influence and shape our thoughts, attitudes, actions by use of our data?

What are the more graspable "lower order dangers" of releasing/selling our personal data? What are the "higher order dangers" (maybe a bit trickier to understand and name)?

How are security practices a way of restraining evil? Give a real-world example.

Think of the crime detective's categories: means, motives, and opportunity. What of those categories can we control or at least steward? How does that apply to data?

What did people first call automobiles, before they had categories for what they were observing and experiencing? How does this illustration help us think about our relationship with “big data”?

How could thinking about private data extend even to thinking about mental privacy, having a right to our own brain activity? What could someone do with your information, or with a whole bunch of people’s information?

## Discipleship questions

How is stewardship of my information also actually a way of loving my neighbor? How does it affect others’ thoughts, attitudes, and even actions when we model complacency or cavalier action towards our own or others’ possessions, whether that be material, digital, or intellectual?

What is the result of failing to treat something with high value? Think of a practical example.

How are you going to use technologies? What motivations exist for

1. turning off all social media and technology, or
2. continuing to use it and trying to learn how to use it well?

How can I show grace towards others’ choices in this area?

How can I continue to develop a healthy awareness of the technological world, the specific design of different technologies, and the way they may be used by individuals and other entities (corporations, governments, etc.)?

## Scriptural anchors/provision

Luke 12 encourages us: “Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes.”

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