

Managing Privacy: Information Technology and Corporate America

H. Jeff Smith

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The ongoing revolution in electronic information technology raises critical questions about our right to privacy. As more personal information is gathered and stored at breathtaking speed, corporate America is confronted with the ethical and practical issues of how to handle the information in its databases: how should it be safeguarded and who should have access to it? In *Managing Privacy*, Jeff Smith examines the policies of corporations such as insurance companies, banks, and credit card firms that regularly process medical, financial, and consumer data. According to Smith, many companies lack comprehensive policies regulating the access to and distribution of personal data, and where stated policies do exist, actual practices often conflict. Few organizations are willing to become leaders in the development of such policies, instead formulating privacy guidelines only after being pressured by consumers, the media, or legislators. Smith argues that as information technology advances, both corporations and society as a whole must modify their approaches to privacy protection, and he presents specific suggestions for developing such policies.

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