

Protect Yourself in the Age of Big Data

Review of: *Privacy in the Age of Big Data: Recognizing Threats, Defending Your Rights, and Protecting Your Family*

Theresa M. Payton & Theodore Claypoole
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“Smashing our gadgets like luddites or living unconnected in the woods like hermits would deprive us of the great advantages life in our own era offers: the advantages of infinite knowledge at our fingertips and constant connection to those we love.” (p. 227)

Recent advances in technology with cloud computing and big data have brought major benefits to society.¹ In their book *Privacy in the Age of Big Data: Recognizing Threats, Defending Your Rights, and Protecting Your Family*, Theresa Payton and Theodore Claypoole outline need-to-know information and provide tips to protect your privacy in light of these new technologies.² The authors depict a reality where data is gathered on individuals in a relentless and ubiquitous manner throughout their everyday lives.³ However, the authors offer deliberate reassurances to their readers that the realities of our technology-driven world do not necessitate seclusion.⁴ Instead, the authors attempt to arm their readers with strategies to increase privacy and security to allow the reader to continue to benefit from their use of modern technology.⁵

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¹ See THERESA M. PAYTON & THEODORE CLAYPOOLE, *PRIVACY IN THE AGE OF BIG DATA* (Rowman & Littlefield ed., 2014).

² See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 17.

³ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 19.

⁴ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 227.

⁵ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 62.

fraud.⁶ Previously, Payton was the first-ever female Chief Information Officer at the White House from 2006-2008.⁷ In that role, she set the business and technology information strategy and direction for the Executive Office of the President.⁸ Additionally, Payton is a leader in her community of Charlotte, North Carolina through her involvement with numerous organizations, while also serving as a trustee of her alma mater, Immaculata University.⁹ Theodore F. Claypoole is a prominent attorney in the privacy and data security field.¹⁰ Currently, he practices at the law firm of Womble Carlyle in Charlotte, North Carolina.¹¹ He is a Senior Partner in the Intellectual Property Practice Group and leads the firm's Privacy and Data Management Team.¹² In addition to this book, Payton and Claypoole previously collaborated to co-author another a privacy-related work titled *Protecting Your Internet Identity: Are You Naked Online?*¹³

In this most recent work, the authors begin with a discussion of the right to privacy in the United States.¹⁴ The authors accurately identify the notion of privacy as complex and personal.¹⁵ Privacy, as it is understood in the United States, is contrasted with the varying beliefs of other democratic countries.¹⁶ The authors emphasize the idea that data privacy is a matter of choice and individuals should have the right to decide if a company can collect information on them.¹⁷ Further, the authors make an important point that the current technology conversation cannot solely focus on policing the collection of data. The conversation must also address preserving the right of individuals to know what kind of information is being collected and what is being

⁶ See *New Trustee: Theresa M. Payton*, IMACULATA MAGAZINE, archived at <http://perma.cc/DUU7-UMAB>.

⁷ See *id.*

⁸ See *id.*

⁹ See *id.*

¹⁰ See *Theodore F. Claypoole*, WOMBLE CARLYLE, archived at <http://perma.cc/Z552-KMFN>.

¹¹ See *id.*

¹² See *id.*

¹³ See *id.*

¹⁴ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 1.

¹⁵ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at xi.

¹⁶ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 231.

¹⁷ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at xi.

done with that information.¹⁸ At the outset, the book provides an analysis of the types of dangers and privacy issues that arise with technology devices typically used every day.¹⁹ The authors then flag dangers to be aware of and ways to protect yourself against these dangers when using your devices.²⁰ The book next details the many opportunities throughout the day when information can be unknowingly collected on an individual.²¹ The authors also evaluate data privacy issues that can occur both inside and outside your home.²² For instance, these potential privacy issues can arise with your wi-fi network, gas and electric utility use, grocery shopping, or driving through an intersection with a traffic light.²³ After highlighting the common data privacy vulnerabilities confronting individuals today, the authors present numerous strategies to protect personal data.²⁴ To address the broader issues, the authors also provide recommendations for legislators and policy makers in an effort to encourage change on a larger scale.²⁵ Ultimately, the authors aim to empower private citizens to protect themselves and advocate for the necessary protections in today's technology-driven world.²⁶

The overall theme of the book is the need for individuals to be informed and aware of privacy dangers and the ways to protect yourself and your family in today's high-speed society.²⁷ The authors recognize the supreme benefits that accompany the recent advances in technology, however, with a serious realism; they present a world in which your data is at risk almost constantly throughout your day.²⁸

¹⁸ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 3.

¹⁹ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 17.

²⁰ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 33.

²¹ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 57.

²² See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 77.

²³ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 196.

²⁴ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 23, 62, 107, 197.

²⁵ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 227.

²⁶ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 227.

²⁷ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at xiv.

²⁸ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 227.

Throughout the book, the authors provide relevant examples of privacy implications associated with conventional technology use.²⁹ These scenarios presented have the potential to affect every reader because the usage of these technologies is so interwoven into our lives.³⁰ The examples are effective and memorable because they are relatable and leave a lasting impact on the reader.³¹ Each example is followed by tips recommended by the authors to ensure better protections in each specific scenario.³² This approach is effective in grabbing the reader's attention with a dramatic example, then encouraging the reader to continue to use the helpful technology, but be armed with the tools to protect themselves and their family.³³

The book is a quick and comprehensive overview of big data and the associated privacy issues that are relevant to nearly every person.³⁴ The authors present the highly technical material in an easy to understand manner with interesting examples and practicable tips.³⁵ The information presented can be reasonably understood and feasibly integrated into the reader's life.³⁶ The book's organization into sections associated with an individual's life allows the reader to think about their own life and process the information and suggestions in a systematic way.³⁷ The book provides examples of privacy concerns surrounding such technologies as mobile devices, online shopping, term-searching, and GPS on your phone and in your car.³⁸ The authors take an informal but knowledgeable tone in presenting this information.³⁹ This book demonstrates the authors' own thorough understanding of the subject matter, yet presents the

²⁹ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 27.

³⁰ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 27.

³¹ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 61.

³² See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 62.

³³ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 62.

³⁴ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 57.

³⁵ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 58.

³⁶ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 58.

³⁷ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 19.

³⁸ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 77.

³⁹ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 77.

information in a way that is palatable for those readers, and seemingly their targeted audience, who have little technical understanding of the advanced technologies (i.e. cloud computing, biometrics, data mining).⁴⁰ The examples the authors provide are slightly dramatic and sometimes seem extreme, however they are effective in being memorable, attention-grabbing, and hopefully drive the readers to implement the authors' suggestions.⁴¹

The authors empower the reader to define their own privacy boundaries and then advocate for those boundaries.⁴² The authors note that when businesses are provided clear privacy limits, then companies tend to stay within those limits.⁴³ Issues arise when there are little to no limits on what these companies can collect on individuals and what they can do with the collected information.⁴⁴ The authors suggest that we, as a society, need to place limits in a manner that protects areas of privacy where we are losing the most privacy fastest, such as in geolocation.⁴⁵ An important point that the authors make is that addressing such issues as location privacy now would keep U.S. businesses from building business models around the collection of that data.⁴⁶ One major takeaway is that it is high time for these privacy limits to be put in place before invasions in our daily lives become out of control and irreversible.⁴⁷

This work is a valuable contribution to the field because it is timely and informative. The issues presented are worrying and seemingly pervasive; however individuals have the ability to better protect themselves through the tips recommended by the authors. It is readable and accessible to the masses with a compilation of examples that are informative, eye-opening, and

⁴⁰ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 139.

⁴¹ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 175.

⁴² See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 203.

⁴³ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 228.

⁴⁴ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 228.

⁴⁵ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 234.

⁴⁶ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 234.

⁴⁷ See Payton, *supra* note 1, at 227.

interesting. The authors were able to strike a balance between scaring the reader into renouncing technology and motivating the reader to take steps to protect themselves and their families.

Overall, the book is entertaining, enlightening, and educational. The authors are successful in educating the reader on the advances in technology that are affecting privacy, especially those potential privacy invasions that commonly go undetected in our everyday lives. The key to the success of this book is the authors' message that you can do a better job of protecting yourself, and although these privacy issues are scary and overwhelming, not all is lost as there are many reasonable protections that can be put in place. This book would be beneficial for everyone to read as it is essential to have an understanding of the greater implications of using these tech devices that are so integrated in our lives. Moreover, the information presented is also particularly important for parents. The authors specifically outline for parents the dangers that exist when children use these technologies and provide tips to help parents teach their children about the possible repercussions of their online activities.