



Understanding Privacy

By Daniel J. Solove

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Privacy is one of the most important concepts of our time, yet it is also one of the most elusive. As rapidly changing technology makes information increasingly available, scholars, activists, and policymakers have struggled to define privacy, with many conceding that the task is virtually impossible.

In this concise and lucid book, Daniel J. Solove offers a comprehensive overview of the difficulties involved in discussions of privacy and ultimately provides a provocative resolution. He argues that no single definition can be workable, but rather that there are multiple forms of privacy, related to one another by family resemblances. His theory bridges cultural differences and addresses historical changes in views on privacy. Drawing on a broad array of interdisciplinary sources, Solove sets forth a framework for understanding privacy that provides clear, practical guidance for engaging with relevant issues.

Understanding Privacy will be an essential introduction to long-standing debates and an invaluable resource for crafting laws and policies about surveillance, data mining, identity theft, state involvement in reproductive and marital decisions, and other pressing contemporary matters concerning privacy.

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Editorial Review

Review

Daniel Solove offers a unique, challenging account of how to think better about-- and of-- privacy. No scholar in America is more committed to demystifying "the right to privacy". (Anita L. Allen, University of Pennsylvania Law School)

Daniel Solove has had the patience and insight to lay privacy bare. This is the most thorough and persuasive conceptualization of privacy written to date. Solove's taxonomy of privacy will become the standard tool for analyzing privacy problems. (Peter P. Swire, C. William O'Neill Professor of Law and Judicial Administration, Ohio State University)

One of the topic's most prolific and thoughtful thinkers, Daniel Solove has written a clear and comprehensive analysis of privacy. In it, he explains why it has been so hard to conceptualize this thing called privacy, and provides a pragmatic, bottom-up understanding. This book will promote sharper thinking and analysis for the next generation of privacy scholarship and policy. (Jerry Kang, University of California, Los Angeles School of Law)

With the publication of *Understanding Privacy*, Daniel J. Solove has firmly established himself as one of America's leading intellectuals in the field of information policy and cyberlaw...Solove has now elevated himself to that rarefied air of "people worth watching" in the cyberlaw field; an intellectual--like Lawrence Lessig or Jonathan Zittrain--whose every publication becomes something of an event in the field to which all eyes turn upon release...Make no doubt about it, Daniel Solove's book--and his approach to classifying and dealing with privacy problems--will have a profound impact on all future privacy debates. In that sense, it is a vital text; a must read for all who follow, or engage in, privacy debates. (Adam Thierer *Technology Liberation Front* 2008-11-08)

Instead of reducing this subject to an academic parlor game, Solove uses interdisciplinary sources to offer a convincing argument about why everyone should care deeply about understanding the nature of privacy. Legal scholars will want to read this book, but so will psychologists, communication specialists, public policy makers, philosophers, and anyone interested in where to draw the line between public and private life. (D. S. Dunn *Choice* 2008-11-01)

[A] thoughtful examination of the concept of privacy: what it is, why it seems forever under threat and why we continue to fight for it...[Solove's] is a pragmatic, contextual approach that tries to understand privacy in practice rather than in theory. (Paul Duguid *The Nation* 2010-04-05)

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About the Author

Daniel J. Solove is Professor of Law at George Washington University Law School.

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