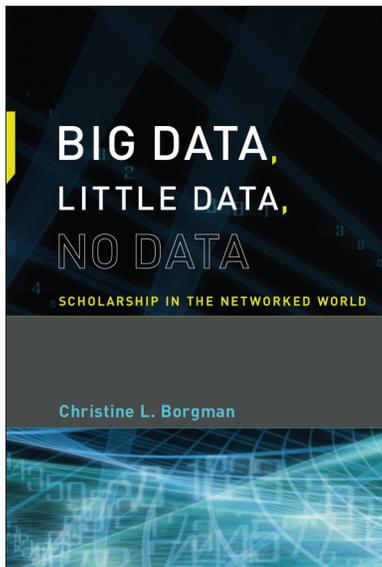


BIG DATA, LITTLE DATA, NO DATA

SCHOLARSHIP IN THE NETWORKED WORLD

Christine L. Borgman

“Big Data” is on the covers of *Science*, *Nature*, the *Economist*, and *Wired* magazines, on the front pages of the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times*. But



despite the media hyperbole, as Christine Borgman points out in this examination of data and scholarly research, having the right data is usually better than having more data; little data can be just as valuable as big data. In many cases, there are no data—because relevant data don’t exist, cannot be found, or are not available. Moreover, data sharing is difficult, incentives to do so are minimal, and data practices vary widely across disciplines.

Borgman, an often-cited authority on scholarly communication, argues that data have no value or meaning in isolation; they exist within a knowledge infrastructure—an ecology of people, practices, technologies, institutions, material objects, and relationships. After laying out the premises of her investigation—six “provocations” meant to inspire discussion about the uses of data

in scholarship—Borgman offers case studies of data practices in the sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities, and then considers the implications of her findings for scholarly practice and research policy. To manage and exploit data over the long term, Borgman argues, requires massive investment in knowledge infrastructures; at stake is the future of scholarship.

Christine L. Borgman is Professor and Presidential Chair in Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. She is the author of *From Gutenberg to the Global Information Infrastructure* and *Scholarship in the Digital Age* (both winners of the “Best Information Science Book” award from ASIS&T), published by the MIT Press.

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“Once again, Borgman hits it out of the park. She moves beyond the trendy discussion of ‘big data’ to focus on the real issue: data, the very concept of which differs among scholarly communities. The challenges to successful data sharing are legion, and she spells them out in detail. Those who follow her insights will save a lot of time and money.”

—John Leslie King, W. W. Bishop Professor of Information, University of Michigan

“We live amidst a sea of data. In *Big Data, Little Data, No Data*, Christine Borgman explores the depths and swells of that data and how they connect with scholarship and, more broadly, systems of knowledge. The result is an invaluable guide to harnessing the power of data, while remaining sensitive to its misuses.”

—Jonathan Zittrain, Professor of Law and Computer Science, Harvard University; Co-founder, Berkman Center for Internet & Society; Director, Harvard Law School Library

“Data by itself has no value. It’s the ever-changing ecosystem surrounding data that gives it meaning. Borgman gets all of this and much more. *Big Data, Little Data, No Data* is filled with thoughtful discussion, examples, and case studies that provide a foundation for the much-needed conversations and decisions to be made about research data. This book is a primer for anyone trying to understand data relevancy in scholarship today.”

—Gregg Gordon, President and CEO, Social Science Research Network