

**Tuck hosts ethics talk on the use and abuse of consumer data  
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Hanover, N.H.—It's easier than ever for companies to accumulate and analyze personal information about their customers. And it's easier than ever for such data to be stolen or misused. As the technology to gather consumer data becomes ever more sophisticated, questions about consumer privacy arise.

On January 17, the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth hosted an Ethics Fireside Chat entitled, "Where's Your Personal Data? The Use and Abuse of Consumer Data." The event featured Katherine Bryant, vice president of consumer advocacy at ChoicePoint, and Robert Ellis Smith, publisher of the *Privacy Journal*. The discussion, moderated by Tuck Professor Richard Shreve, focused on how information service agencies like ChoicePoint collect and process data, what security protections are in place, and what consumers should know about the risks of data abuse.

ChoicePoint—one of the largest data brokers in the U.S.—revealed two years ago that criminals had stolen personal information on more than 145,000 consumers. This was the first disclosure of data loss from a major company, and soon a wide variety of corporations and other organizations reported similar losses. The ChoicePoint disclosure was significant not only for its scale, but also for the light it shed on the growing data-broker industry.

During the discussion, Smith challenged data brokers like ChoicePoint to think of themselves as "information banks," which should "act as a trust, a fiduciary" as financial banks do. He argued that data brokers should be proactive in making sure the data they collect is accurate. They should also ensure that the customers requesting to use consumer data are who they claim to be.

Bryant countered that ChoicePoint believes in the responsible use of information. She noted that after their disclosure of data loss the company stepped up its credentialing procedures to better screen buyers of information. The company is also looking to other consumer advocacy groups to help educate consumers about data use. She noted that the company's own newly formed consumer advocacy unit and her title as consumer advocate—an industry first—demonstrate ChoicePoint's commitment to forming a more direct, responsive relationship with consumers.

This Fireside Chat was co-sponsored by the Dartmouth Centers Forum, the Center for Digital Strategies at Tuck, and the Allwin Initiative for Corporate Citizenship at Tuck. The discussion continued the themes of privacy and identity explored earlier this month at Tech@Tuck. Both events support this year's Dartmouth Centers Forum theme of Freedom and Technology.

For more about Tuck's Center for Digital Strategies and Allwin Initiative for Corporate Citizenship, please visit their websites.

More about the Dartmouth Centers Forum can be found on their website.

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