information & the state

copyrights of information

Feb 21, 2012

Thursday, February 23, 2012
surveillance and storage

(i) the state (public information) -- today

(ii) the firm (private information?) -- Thursday

from prisons to factories?

cp Peter Burke,
   "Controlling Knowledge: Churches & States"

cp Chandler & Cortada
   A Nation Transformed by Information
who's watching?

UK Government To Demand Data On Every Call And Email

Plans could force ISPs and phone operators to hand over records on all phone calls, emails, Tweets and Facebook messages

On February 20, 2012 by Steve McCaskill 3

ISP's and landline and mobile phone operators could be forced to store records of calls, texts, emails and visited websites under a new government scheme designed to combat terrorism.

The government has begun negotiations with the companies involved and the new Communications Capabilities Development Programme (CCDP) could be announced as early as May, according to reports.
"sailors ... trace their family ... names upon the wrist ... If it were possible for such a practice to become universal ... Who are you? ... no room for prevarication in the answer ... men were thus held as it were by an invisible chain."

-- Jeremy Bentham, Principles of Penal Law [1843]
nature of information

Giddens
accumulating/storing information

Scott & Co
standardizing information

pull to push
providing information
aside:

nature of information

like a fact?

"An immense amount of physical and intellectual work is needed to create even the most simple statistical fact--indeed, the simpler a fact is, the more refinement, and therefore the more effort, is necessary. This aspect was noticed early on in the history of statistics, not least by Charles Babbage: facts have to be manufactured"


or a natural resource?
"behind our backs"?
surveillance of information

"information wants to be free"

"filosofar vuol esser libero"  
-- Galileo

"libertas philosophandi"  
-- Kepler, Descartes, Spinoza

"oportet praeterea, liberali animo philosophum esse"  
-- Alcinous (?1 cent CE)

constraint - resource

"information needs to be constrained"
to the state
"the permanent patronym would take its place beside ... other 'optical technologies" ... weights & measures ... legal code ... cadastral maps ... property registers ... tax code, a common currency ... standard dialect," Scott et al

states of information

Domesday
surveying
registering
storing
sealing

pull & push
citizenship, taxation, recruiting, property
"papermongers"

**Philip II** 1527-1598  
*el rey papelero*

**Jean-Baptiste Colbert** 1619-1683  
"the information master"  
*erudition d'état*

1648, *Westphalia* & *Staatkunde* to statistics
The Mortality Bill is come to 267; June 29th, 1665. Above 700 died of the plague this week."

--Pepys, July 13, 1665

from pull to push

1603: regular bills of mortality

1611: incorporation of parish clerks counting by "searchers"

1629: other deaths

1728: age of deceased

1837: last bills
"apprehension of the wrong balance of trade, appears of such a nature, that it discovers itself wherever one is out of humour with the ministry, or is in low spirits."

--David Hume, "Of the balance of trade," 1758
Habermasian imperative

"something exceedingly ridiculous in the composition of monarchy; it first excludes a man from the means of information yet empowers him to act in cases where the highest judgement is required"

--Tom Pain, Common Sense, 1776
Habermasian imperative

"It is certainly right and prudent to consult the public opinion. ... If the public opinion did not happen to square with mine; if, after pointing out to them the danger, they did not see it in the same light with me, or if they conceived that another remedy was preferable to mine, I should consider it as my due to my king, due to my Country, due to my honour to retire ... but one thing is clear, that I ought to give the public the means of forming an opinion."

--Charles James Fox, 1792
whatever happened to England?

"Give them fair and full information, and [the people] will do the thing that is right in consequence of it."

-- Knox, Spirit of Despotism, 1795

"If the parties who act contrary to their interest had a proper knowledge of that interest, they would act well."

-- James Mill, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1824
Society for Constitutional Information

"... necessary that every Englishman should know what that constitution is ... and when endangered."  --SCI, 1780

"great advantaged might be derived from a collection of well authenticated facts ... in order that the community may be possessed of the means of judging for themselves ...

With a view of procuring the proper materials for such information ... country correspondents should be requested to supply ... [number of electors, number of resident electors, houses, diminution of voting ... what tenure ... corrupt usage]"

--SCI, 1783
"the duty of every man to furnish himself ... with political information ... public Ignorance is in the interest of Oppressors, and public Information the interest of the people" --SCI, 1795
statistics

John Sinclair,
Statistical Account of Scotland, 1791-1799
$societies$

Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge 1826

Royal Statistical Society, 1833
"the first and most essential rule of its conduct to exclude all opinions" -- Richard Jones, 1833

Social Science Association 1857
"volunteer legislators of Great Britain .. brings together persons of all opinions consistent with the profession of a desire for social improvement" -- J.S. Mill
"Nothing important was ever brought before the government without a minster saying ... 'I have called for a report.'"

--Balzac, *Bureaucracy, or A Civil Service Reformer*, 1824
official competition

the "incontinent printer"
Parliamentary Commissions & "Blue Books"

wars, colonies, trade

"moral statistics"
poor law
child labour
factories acts
mines
sanitary conditions
Welsh education ...
Poor Law Commission

"We should make a gradual attack in public opinion"

Nassau Senior, Poor Law Commissioner

SDUK-sponsorship

Harriet Martineau, Poor Laws and Paupers Illustrated (1833)
Leonard Horner was one of the Factory Inquiry Commissioners in 1833, and Inspector, or rather Censor of Factories till 1859. He rendered undying service to the English working class. He carried on a life-long contest, not only with the embittered manufacturers, but also with the Cabinet, to whom the number of votes given by the masters in the Lower House, was a matter of far greater importance than the number of hours worked by the 'hands' in the mills.

--Karl Marx, *Capital*
"A more general diffusion of accurate knowledge regarding the state of public affairs would tend to check that excitement and party spirit which has often been created by misrepresentation or exaggeration, and has produced an annoyance to the government and at least a temporary disaffection of the public mind."

--William Jacob, 1832
"the public at large remain without information and without interest on all great matters of practice; or if they have any knowledge of them, it is but a dilettante knowledge, like that which people have of the mechanical arts who have never handled a tool."

--John Stuart Mill  Considerations on Representative Government, 1862
push & pull

"Our most practical check upon existing abuses; and small is the error of giving too much information, in comparison of the guilt of withholding any." -- *Times*, 1828

"The public cannot have too much information." -- *Times*, 1882

"It was not wise to give too much information with regard to the business they had in hand, as it might not be to the advantage of the company." -- *Times*, 1867
shift in tactics

circulation problems

peccavi

not so harmless
"He shall from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient."

**US constitutional information**
- Census - art I §2
- Journal - art I §5
- Expenditure - art I §9
- State of the union - art II §3s

**France**
- Protected names
- An XI (1803)
- 1810
state mongering

An act concerning...

1. public archive
2. state printer
3. pilots for SF
4. comptroller
5. treasurer
6. Sec. of state
8. translator
11. AG
14. Supreme Court
30. incorporation of cities
36. commissioner of deeds
41. notaries
49. lawful fences
48. incorporation of towns
53. weights & measures
55. limited partners
59. recorder's office
64. officers of health
67. surveyors
69. librarian
72. register of wills
89. marks & brands
90. reporter
93. conveyances
95. common law
117. incorp. of colleges
123. assayer

Statutes of California, 1849-50
information & the state
