

# s/PETs/PLTs/g

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Privacy and Public Policy Conference  
9 February, 2026



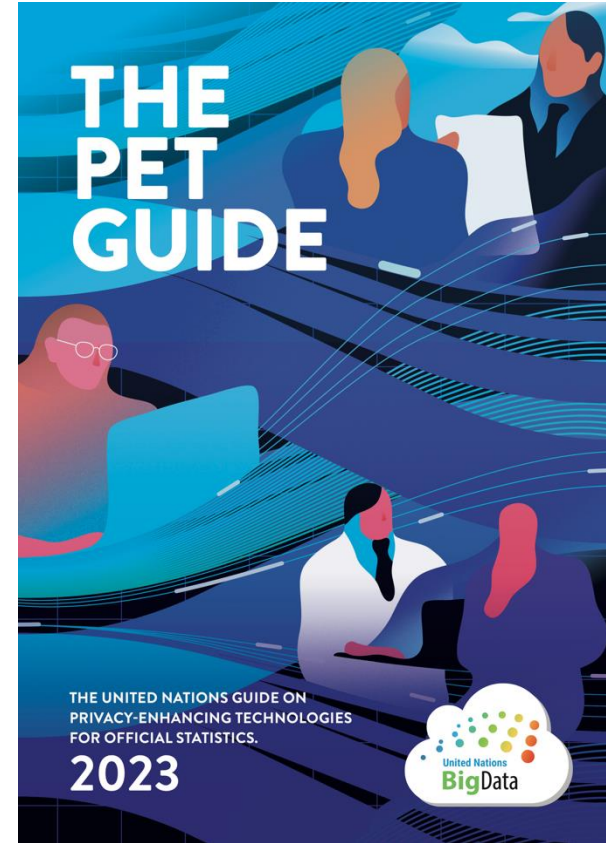
OPINION

## What It's Like to Live in a Surveillance State

By James A. Millward



Ongoing Privacy Apocalypse



Cryptographic Maturity



# So, lets see how its going...

Privacy-Enhancing  
Technologies  
PRIZE CHALLENGE



OUR WORK

## Privacy Preserving Attribution for Advertising

FEBRUARY 8, 2022 | MARTIN THOMSON



# Three categories

Not necessarily a bad thing  
Maybe even good!

1

Replacing existing workflows with “private” versions

2

Using PETs to get more data than we had before

3

Absolute, chaotic nonsense

Not what normal people would mean  
when they say “privacy enhancing”

# What's the problem?

- “Privacy Enhancing” = “Virtuous”
- Misaligned expectations
- Conflates systems that *reduce* the information access with this other category
  - Problem for users
  - Problem for policy makes



Privacy Enhancing Technologies



Purpose Limiting Technologies

# New name: Purpose Limiting Technologies

- Let's use a name that *actually* says what it does
- Fits the ways in which cryptography thinks about itself
- Aligns expectations correctly and removes implicit virtue signaling



# New pitch: Secondary effects of PLTS

1

Huh... this tech  
doesn't just do  
"privacy"...

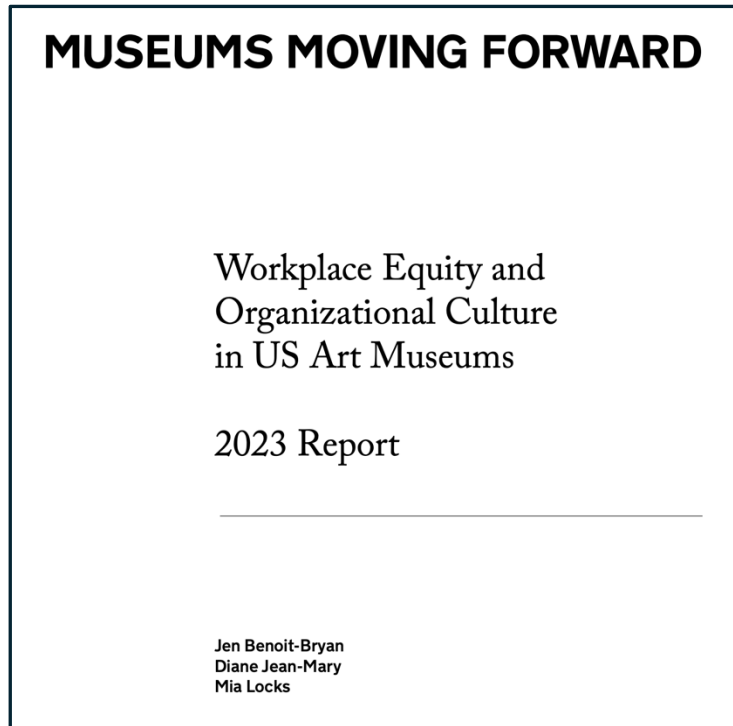


2

What other social  
properties do  
they have?

# Case study 1: MPC

“Joint system deployment leads to relationship building”



# Case study 2: Differential Privacy

“Injecting statistical noise forces data users to reckon with constructed nature of the data”

## Differential Perspectives: Epistemic Disconnects Surrounding the U.S. Census Bureau’s Use of Differential Privacy

by danah boyd and Jayshree Sarathy

CITE

SOCIAL

DOWNLOAD

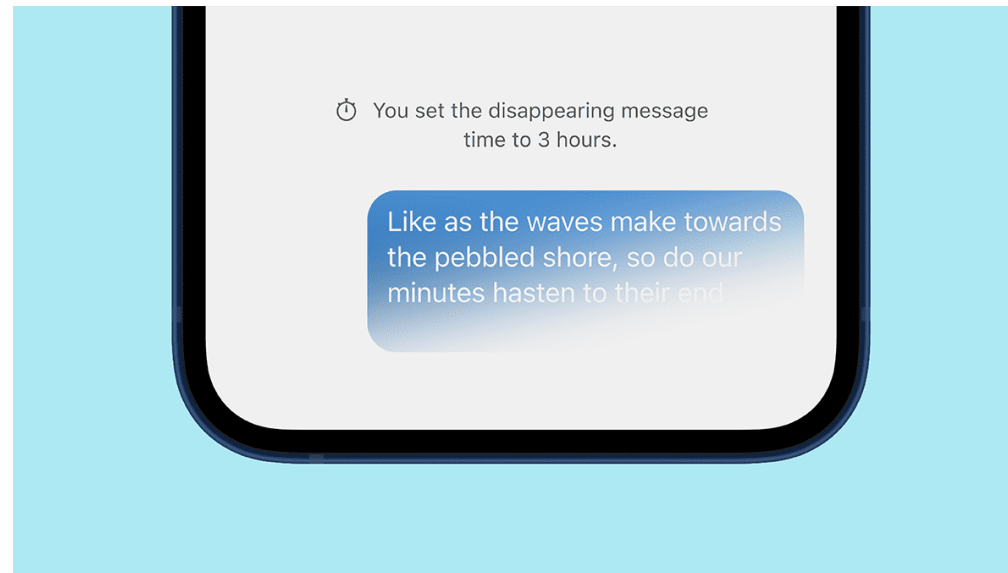
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# Case study 3: Disappearing Messages

(h/t Priyanka Nanayakkara)

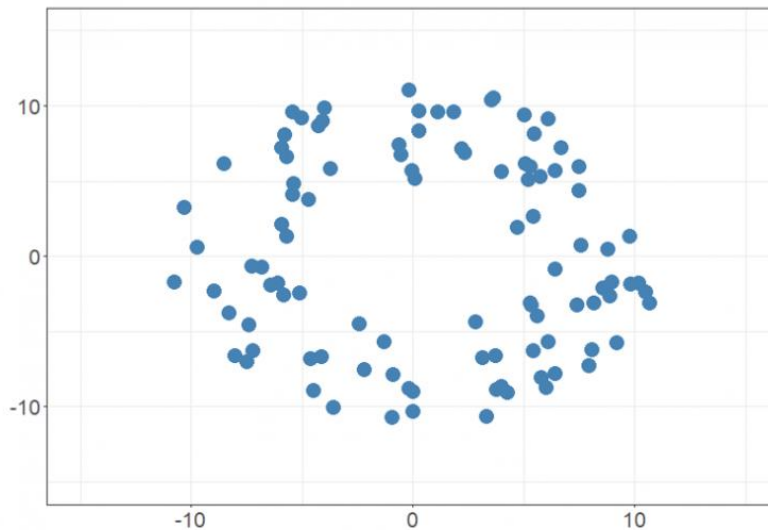
“Disappearing messages makes texting feel more casual and helps reduce *message response debt*”



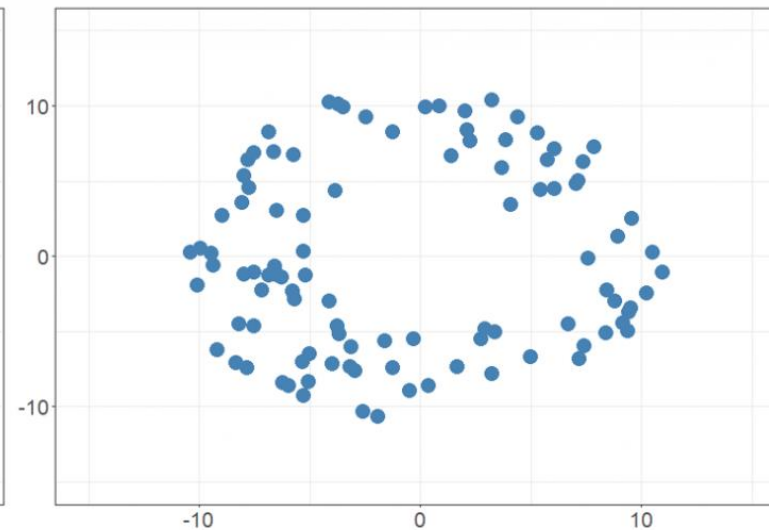
# Case study 4: Synthetic Data

(h/t Jeremy Seeman)

“Transitioning to synthetic data forces use-case enumerate with involvement from data users”



Original data



Synthetic data

The synthetic data retains the structure of the original data but is not the same

# Summing up

1

The name “PETs”  
is getting in our  
way

2

New name:  
Purpose Limiting  
Technologies

3

Opportunity to  
study and  
articulate new  
properties

# Thank you!

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