Municipal Open Data:
An Interdisciplinary Analysis

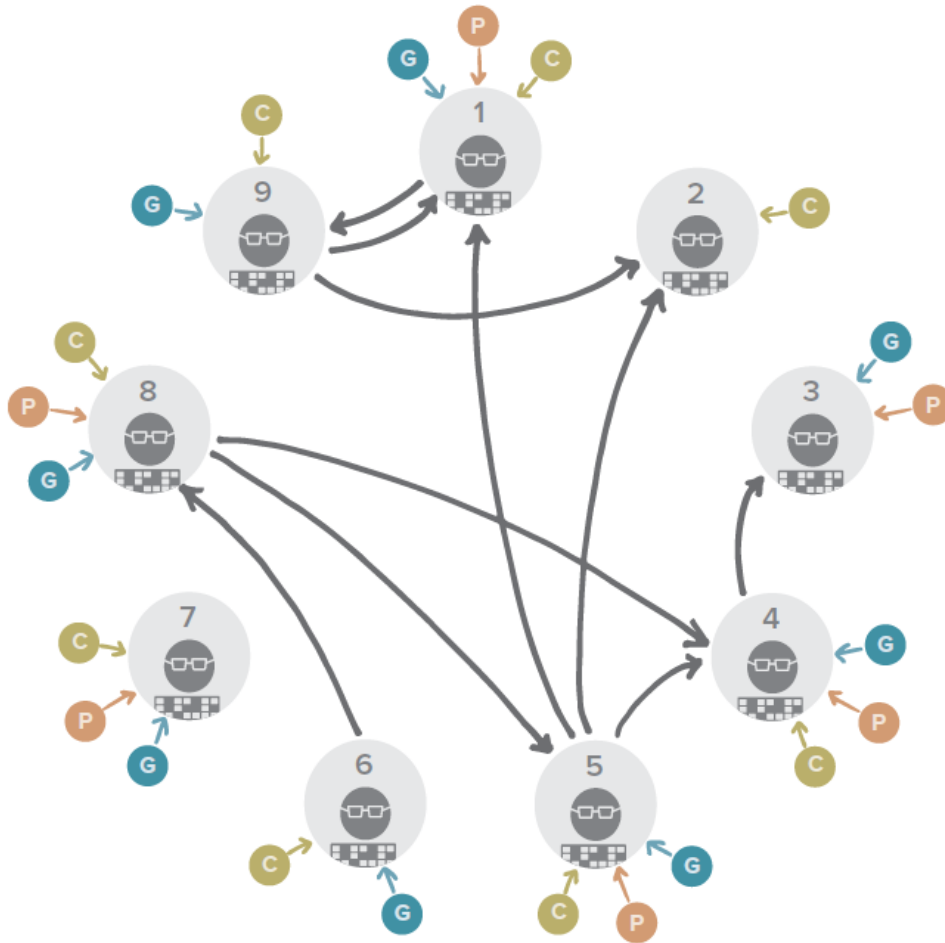## Jan Whittington & Ryan Calo

The 19th Annual BCLT/BTLJ Symposium
University of California, Berkeley
April 17, 2015

The nine data brokers the FTC studied collect information from many sources.*

data brokers in the study
government sources†
publicly available sources‡
commerical sources

US FTC. *Data Brokers: A Call For Transparency and Accountability*. Washington DC, May 2014. Exhibit 2.

* The Commission issued identical Orders to File Special Reports ("Orders") to nine data brokers under Section 6(b) of the Federal Trade Commission Act, 15 U.S.C. § 46(b), to seek information about the data brokers' practices related to consumer data collection and use.

† Includes data brokers that sell information from government sources.

‡ Includes data brokers that sell information from publicly available sources.

Research Questions

1. Does open data increase public trust in the effective and efficient delivery of public services?

2. How might the release of open data be governed to meet the public need for privacy?

3. What harms could municipal open data lead to, including disparate racial or social impact?

Four Approaches

1. Eight focus groups
2. Interviews with nine departments
3. Technical analysis of data
4. Legal analysis of data

How Data Opens

Cities **PUSH** data to an open data portal

People **PULL** data out (e.g., public disclosure requests)

Cities **SPILL** data (e.g., external or internal breaches)

Hopes

"Having the data be open is an incredible source of accountability. It is a key to democracy."

"It could be useful for commercial benefit."

"If a public agency has, as you said, lots and lots of data … entrepreneurs can use it to make money. One purpose of most governments is to help the citizens thrive, which means to put money in your pocket."

Fears : Push

"I fear that it would be used to lower public property values, redline insurance, et cetera, in neighborhoods with high crime."

"I'm worried that data about precincts where people don't vote much could lead politicians to write them off."

"If the city … maintains the ability to selectively refrain from publishing portions of that data, then we're not a whole lot better off than if they just weren't publishing in the first place."

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Fears : Pull

"Data is power now."

"How do you find out which customers are heavy commuters? You just ask the city for all the tapes about license plates…"

"It doesn't feel safe to me at all. There is a Seattle Public Utility LBGT group… there was a guy requesting all the members' name and information. He was just anti-gay."

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Fears : Spill

"Can't keep nothing safe. What's your definition of open anyway? Everything is open."

"... cops taking a look because it happens to be on a computer somewhere."

"If for-profit companies in the health care sector, for example, have under-invested in data security, then it's fair to say the IT systems of many municipal governments aren't where they should be either."
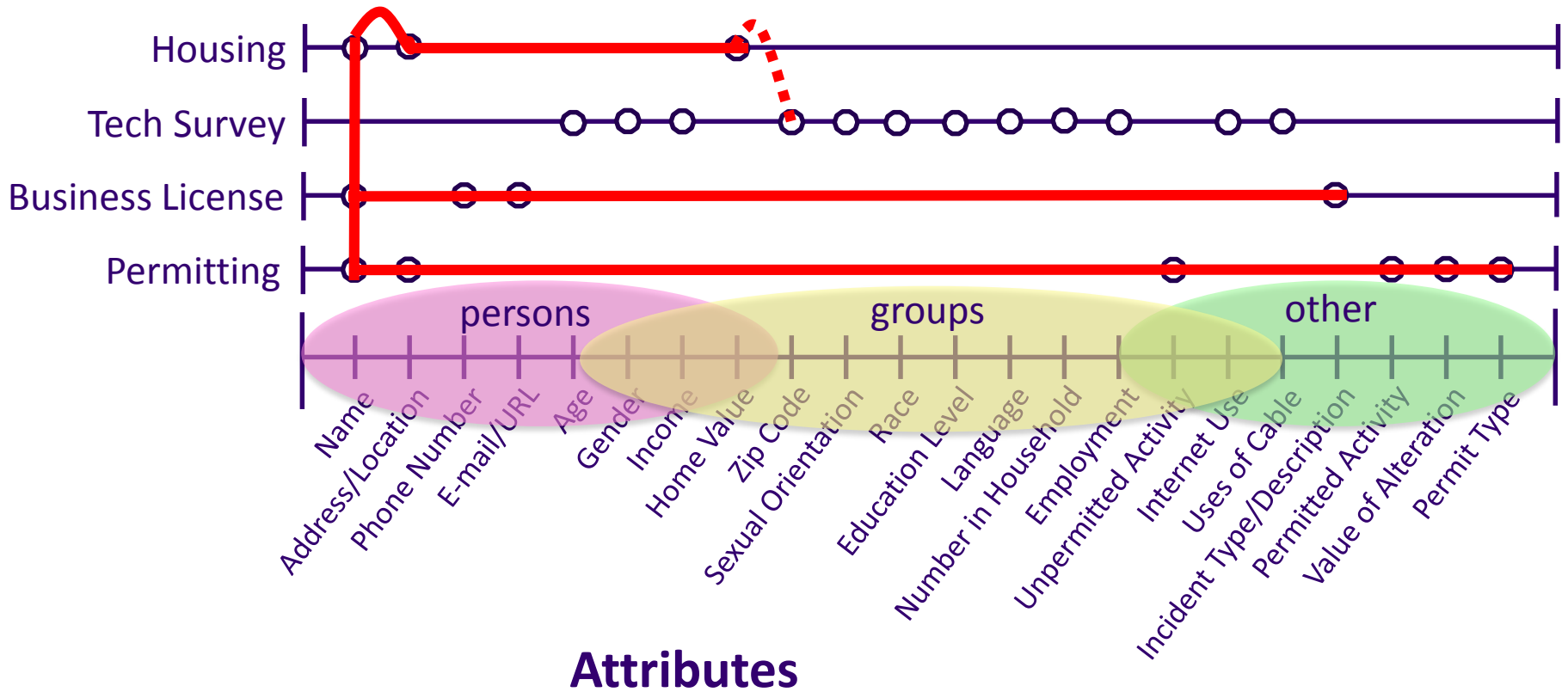
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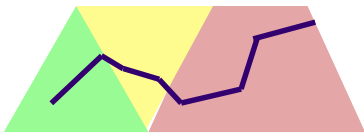|			
City Auditor	Fire Department	Immigrant & Refugee	Seattle Center
City Budget Office	Human Resources	Intergov Relations	Transportation
City Light	Human Services	Prof Accountability	Municipal Court
City Purchasing	Information Tech	Sustainability & Env	Office for Civil Rights
Customer Service	Neighborhoods	City Clerk	Parks & Recreation
Economic Devt	Arts & Culture	The Waterfront	Police Department
Edu & Early Learning	Cable Comms	Planning & Devt	Public Library
Emergency Mgmt	Film & Music	Retirement	Public Utilities
Finance & Admin Svc	Housing	Animal Shelter	Special Events

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Public Data : Push

Data Sets

Housing	
Tech Survey	
Business License	
Permitting	

persons | groups | other

Name, Address/Location, Phone Number, E-mail/URL, Age, Gender, Income, Home Value, Zip Code, Sexual Orientation, Race, Education Level, Language, Number in Household, Employment, Unpermitted Activity, Internet Use, Uses of Cable, Incident Type/Description, Permitted Activity, Value of Alteration, Permit Type

Attributes

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Shifts in Data Collection

real time usage

real time location

video

	real time usage	real time location	video
	electricity meter mesh network	transport device location tracking	police body worn video
	electricity meter via phone line	transport parking kiosk data	police dashboard video
Sensor	stationary	stationary	mobile
Subject	stationary	mobile	mobile
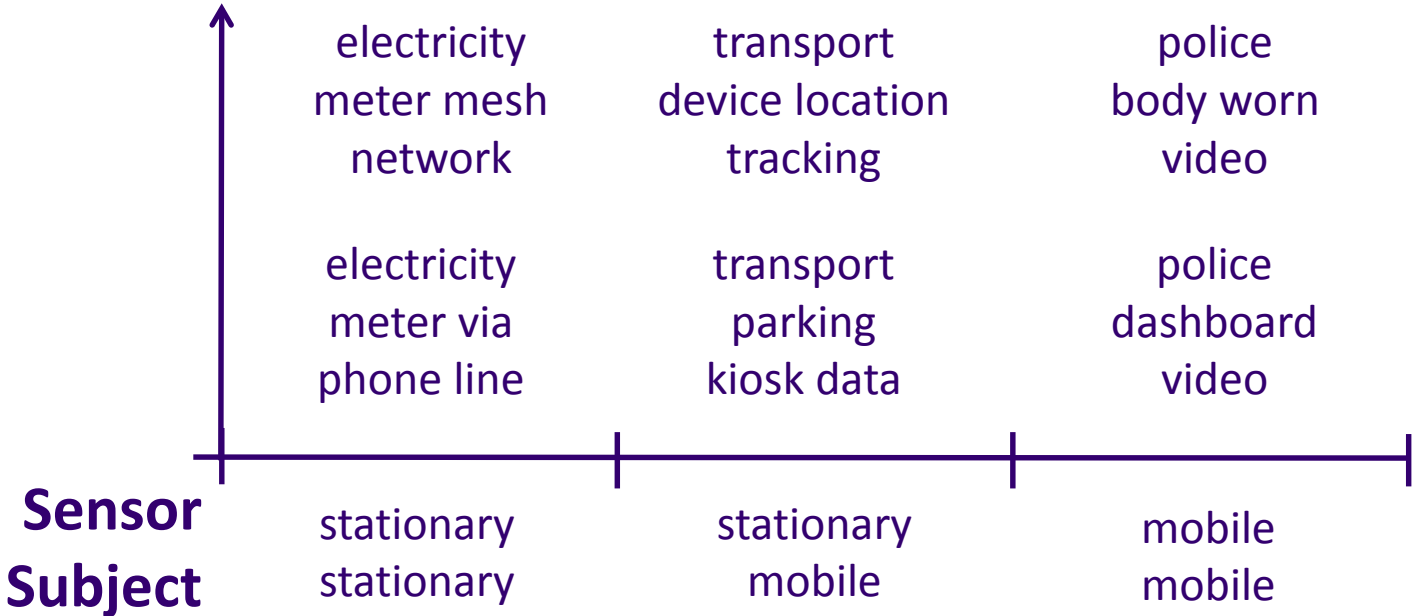
Data Requests : Pull

Frequency of Public Disclosure Requests

anonymous, "frivolous"

purposeful, identified

paper
15¢/page

fax
10¢/page

phone
free

online
free

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seattle.gov
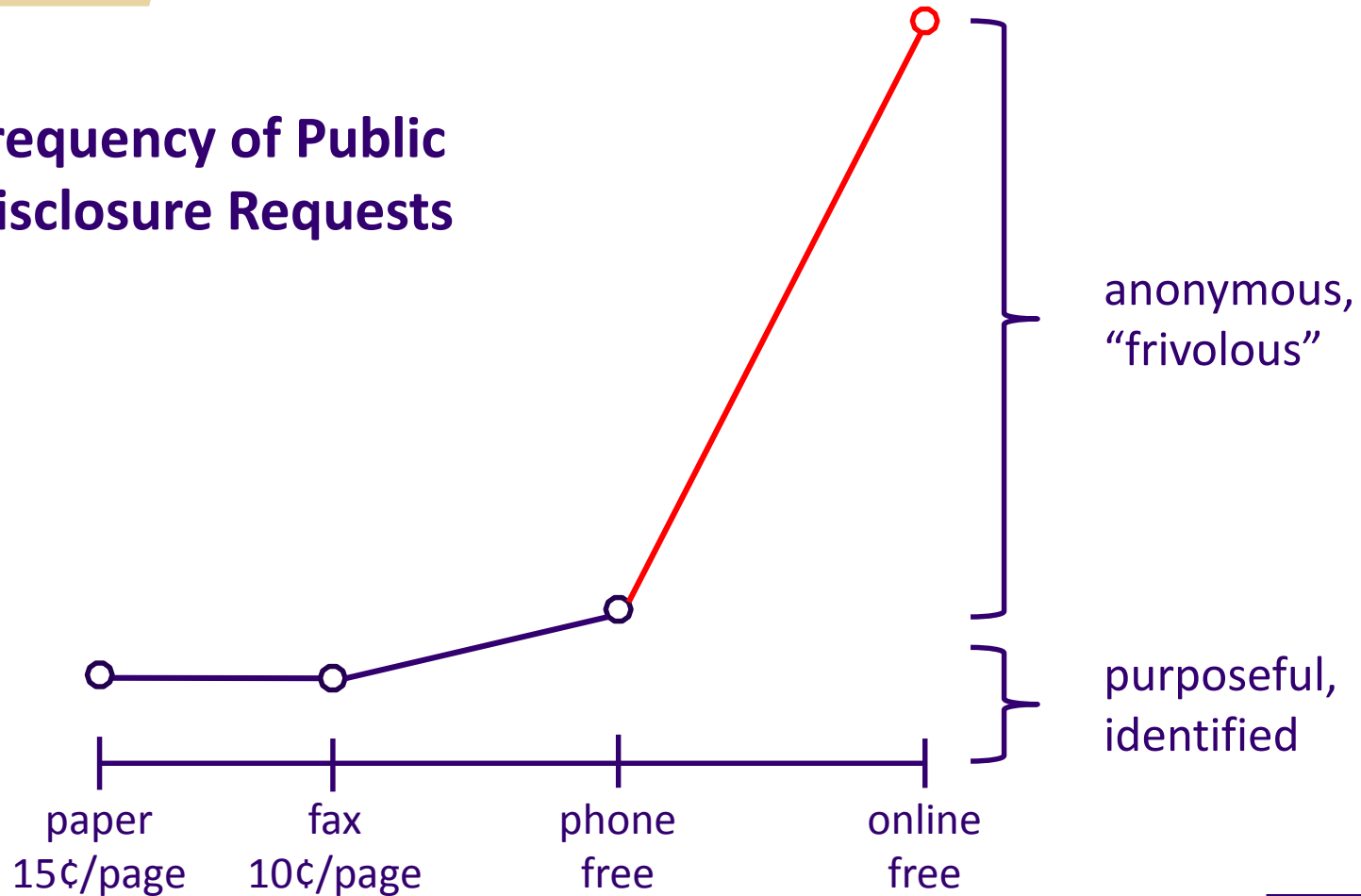
Blanket Contract Search
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This tool allows you to search for a blanket contract. For more detailed contract information or to request a complete official hard-copy, please contact City Purchasing and Contracting Services at (206) 684-0444.

You have an option to limit your search by Contract Status

Contract Status: ⚪Closed   ⦿Open   ⚪All

Find a Contract by Contract Number

Contract Number: [   ]   [Find Contracts]

Or Find a Contract by Vendor Name

Vendor Name: [   ]   ⚪Starts with ⦿Contains   [Find Contracts]

Or Find a Contract by Commodity Keyword

Commodity Keyword: [   ]   ⚪Starts with ⦿Contains   [Find Contracts]

Or Find all Approved Blanket Contracts

All Approved Blanket Contracts: [Find Contracts]

[Reset]

For additional inquiries, please contact City Purchasing Buyers at *City Purchasing Buyers*

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seattle.gov

Blanket Contract Search

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Blanket Vendor Contracts by Vendor Name contains **Affirma**

No Data Exists for the requested Vendor Name or Contract Number or Commodity Description

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City as Customer

"The use or disclosure ... of any City information not necessary for ... performance of Vendor's responsibility is prohibited."

"It is the understanding of the city that data gathered are encrypted to fully eliminate the possibility of identifying individuals or vehicles."

"[Vendor] personnel will not use, process, or disclose customer data without authorization. [Vendor] personnel are obligated to maintain the confidentiality of any customer data and this obligation continues even after their engagement ends."

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City as Customer : Spill

"IN NO EVENT WILL [VENDOR] ... BE LIABLE FOR ... ANY DAMAGES OF ANY KIND ... THAT RESULTS FROM MISTAKES, OMMISSIONS, INTERRUPTIONS, DELECTION OF FILES OR EMAILS, DEFECTS, VIRUSES, DELAYS IN OPERATION OR TRANSMISSION OR ANY FAILURE OF PERFORMANCE, WHETHER OR NOT RESULTING FROM ACTS OF GOD, COMMUNICATIONS FAILURE, THEFT, DESTRUCTION OR UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS TO [VENDOR] RECORDS PROGRAMS OR SERVICES..."

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