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# **"Essentially made of information": concepts and implications of informational privacy**

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## **Abstract**

### **Introduction.**

This paper presents an approach to a conceptual understanding of privacy issues, rooted in Luciano Floridi's philosophy of information and information ethics. It draws from Floridi's ideas of ontological information privacy, in combination with other frameworks.

### **Methods**

Qualitative conceptual analysis of a set of material found by a comprehensive search for articles and books discussing Floridi's informational privacy, and a selective search for related relevant materials; sources used were Web of Science, Library and Information Science and Technology Abstracts, and Google Scholar. A detailed evaluation of Floridi's ideas of informational privacy within his philosophy of information, and a comparison with other informational privacy models, leads to an analysis of their applicability to research and practice in the library and information sciences.

### **Results**

There are five major considerations: each person is constituted by their information, so that informational privacy is fundamental, overlaying other privacy type; breach of informational privacy is an aggression against personal identity and self-development, and hence protection of privacy should be based directly on the protection of human dignity; explicit protection for group privacy is as important as for individual privacy; digital technologies can both defend and damage privacy, and can also change our understanding of it; information friction, anonymity, and obscurity are key concepts.

### **Conclusions**

Floridi's conception of privacy, within his philosophy of information, offers, in our view, the best basis for developing information privacy as a field of research, study, and practice within the library/information disciplines and professions. Suggestions for future research include: formulation of LIS privacy issues in terms of Floridi's conception, to assess its value; introduction of information privacy concepts into models of information behaviour and information literacy; investigation of quantitative and semi-quantitative privacy modelling, based on a formal analysis of informational frictions.

**Keywords:** philosophy of information; information ethics; privacy; conceptual models