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Big Data, Little Data, Open Data, and Scholarship

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The enthusiasm for big data is obscuring the complexity and diversity of data in scholarship and the challenges for stewardship. Data practices are local, varying from field to field, individual to individual, and country to country. They are a lens to observe the rapidly changing landscape of scholarly work in the sciences, social sciences, and the humanities. Inside the black box of *data* is a plethora of research, technology, and policy issues. Data are best understood as representations of observations, objects, or other entities used as evidence of phenomena for the purposes of research or scholarship. Rarely do they stand alone, separable from software, protocols, lab and field conditions, and other context. Concerns for data sharing and open access raise questions about what data to keep, what to share, when, how, and with whom. Open data is sometimes viewed simply as releasing data without fees. In research contexts, open data may pose complex issues of licensing, ownership, responsibility, standards, interoperability, and legal harmonization. To scholars, data can be assets, liabilities, or both. Other stakeholders in research data include funding agencies, publishers, libraries, archives, repositories, and universities. This talk will explore the stakes and stakeholders in research data, drawn from the forthcoming book, *Big Data, Little Data, No Data: Scholarship in the Networked World*, MIT Press, January, 2015.

[Christine L. Borgman](#), Professor & Presidential Chair in Information Studies at UCLA, is the author of more than 200 [publications](#) in information studies, computer science, and communication. Her monographs, [Scholarship in the Digital Age: Information, Infrastructure, and the Internet](#) (MIT Press, 2007) and [From Gutenberg to the Global Information Infrastructure: Access to Information in a Networked World](#) (MIT Press, 2000), each won the [Best Information Science Book of the Year](#) award from the American Society for Information Science and Technology. Her next book, *Big Data, Little Data, No Data: Scholarship in the Networked World*, is forthcoming from MIT Press in early 2015. She is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and of the Association for Computing Machinery, and a recipient of the [Paul Evan Peters Award](#) from the Coalition for Networked Information, Association for Research Libraries, and EDUCAUSE, and the [Research in Information Science Award](#) from the American Association of Information Science and Technology. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the [Electronic Privacy Information Center](#), and U.S. Co-Chair of the CODATA-ICSTI Task Group on Data Citation and Attribution.