

Publication

Working Through Ethics Review of Big Data Research Projects: An Investigation into the Experiences of Swiss and American Researchers

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The employment of Big Data as an increasingly used research method has introduced novel challenges to ethical research practices and to ethics committees (ECs) globally. The aim of this study is to explore the experiences of scholars with ECs in the ethical evaluation of Big Data projects. Thirty-five interviews were performed with Swiss and American researchers involved in Big Data research in psychology and sociology. The interviews were analyzed using thematic coding. Our respondents reported lack of support from ECs, absence of appropriate expertise among members of the boards, and lack of harmonized evaluation criteria between committees. To implement ECs practices we argue for updating the expertise of board members and the institution of a consultancy model between researchers and ECs.

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