



Legal, Ethical, and Privacy Considerations of Street View Imaging



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Guiding Questions

- What legal, ethical, and privacy considerations should be addressed when collecting and using street view data, particularly in disaster-affected areas where personal information may be more sensitive?
- Is it possible to provide “informed consent” when acquiring SVI?



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An aerial photograph of a city, likely New Orleans, completely inundated with floodwater. The water is a dark, murky blue-grey color, covering almost the entire visible area. Only the roofs of buildings, trees, and some utility poles are visible above the water level. In the background, a large body of water, possibly a bay or river, is visible with a large ship docked at a pier. A bridge with a tall tower is also visible on the right side. The overall scene depicts a massive scale of flooding.

Legal, Privacy, and Ethical Considerations

Legal, Ethical, and Privacy Issues

- Different legal contexts, different definitions of privacy
- What is public and what is private?
- Concerns with surveillance and criminalization
- Ethical concerns... largely silent
 - Who “owns” the data?
 - Who has control over the interpretation of the data?
 - What if the data are detrimental to people and/or communities?

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Informed Consent



“**Informed consent** is one of the founding principles of **research ethics**. Its intent is that human participants can enter research freely (**voluntarily**) with full information about what it means for them to take part, and that they give consent **before** they enter the research... There must be no undue influence on participants to consent. The **minimum requirements** for consent to be informed are that the participant understands what the research is and what they are consenting to.” – Oxford University



Key Takeaways:

- Literature is also largely silent on whether “informed consent” is possible in the context of *research* using Street View Imaging
- Major concerns that have been raised are related to:
 - Power differentials
 - Opting out is not a possibility; when it is, invisibility may have its own negative impacts
 - One dimensional, “outsider” representations and interpretations of people’s lives, livelihoods, and communities
 - Stigmatization and marginalization of already marginal people and places



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THANK YOU



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