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Monthly Conference Series | Dialogue No. 215

Tuesday, November 19, 2024, 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

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Pandemics, Privacy, and Public Preferences: How the Law Can Improve Public Health Policy

Cason Schmit, JD
Texas A&M University

The COVID-19 pandemic and heightened social unrest thrust personal data privacy into the spotlight. How have these unprecedented events shaped public attitudes toward the use of identifiable data for public health and research? This dialogue will examine the disconnect between U.S. privacy laws and public preferences, address how major events of a tumultuous year influenced attitudes toward data use, and explore how privacy laws can be reformed to better align with public needs and enhance public health efforts.

Cason Schmit is an assistant professor at Texas A&M University's School of Public Health where he directs the MPH program and the Program in Health Law and Policy. A licensed attorney with a JD from the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University, Schmit's interdisciplinary research spans law, health informatics, ethics, and public health policy. His work has appeared in *Science*, *Milbank Quarterly* and *BMC Public Health*. His work, initially at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and continuing at Texas A&M, explores the role of law as a tool to promote population health. Schmit's research focuses on health information technology, particularly the alignment (or misalignment) between law and public health ethics.

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