

2020

## Welcome to Cordell Perspectives


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### Repository Citation

Richards, Neil M. and Heusel, Jonathan W., "Welcome to Cordell Perspectives" (2020).  
*Scholarship@WashULaw*. 565.  
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## ***Welcome to Cordell Perspectives.***

The world around us is changing.

At no other time in recent history has this familiar trope been so literally true. The pace of change in our world has been increasing for years, but the COVID-19 pandemic represents a radical and profound change that has affected almost every human being alive. In just a few short months, our lives and our societies have been sharply transformed, as millions have become infected with the new virus and thousands upon thousands have died. The pandemic will continue to affect all of our lives for many years, in predictable and unpredictable ways. How do we sort out the good information from the bad; the information we need to make important decisions for ourselves, our families and our communities? If our way of life going forward is forever changed, how can we have confidence that the changes are good? And for whom? And, importantly, how can we emerge from this crisis with societies that are better, stronger, more inclusive and more just than they were before?

Washington University's Cordell Institute, a bold and deliberate collaboration between its Schools of Medicine and Law, was dedicated in 2018 as a thoughtful space to analyze and work to solve some of the world's 'wicked problems' [i] like many of those posed by the current coronavirus pandemic. The Cordell Institute is, at its core, a collection of dedicated legal and biomedical science scholars and practicing professionals, corporate executives who understand their important role in ensuring that modern technology is used responsibly, and the students, fellows and newly minted professionals in these fields who want to work to build an ethical framework into our emerging digital future. Today, we inaugurate a series of essays from the Cordell Institute entitled "Cordell Perspectives." As the name suggests, our Cordell Perspectives will bring forth a wide variety of issues—many of which will be topical and familiar—but others may have been hidden from public view and thus will seem new and unfamiliar. The purpose of this series is to get you thinking, to provide information and interpretations that help you to understand the world's complex issues of big data technology, human information and how it is used and regulated (or not), and the legal and ethical considerations that often get left behind as our world progresses toward a tenuous, data-driven future. The Cordell Perspectives Series will also allow you the opportunity to get to know the people of the Cordell Institute, fellows and scholars we hope you will come to know well and trust.

Edward Snowden, former National Security Agency analyst and whistleblower, recently issued a dire warning that governments around the world might exploit the coronavirus pandemic to build "an architecture of oppression." [ii] Indeed, immense datasets are currently being collected to support current and future pandemic data models, permit tracing and testing, to understand the economic and social effects of the virus on our societies, and for myriad additional purposes. Governments and corporations alike will learn very quickly, in this era of Artificial/Augmented Intelligence, about how to collect and analyze data on an enormous scale, including data about you that you may consider to be private. And any crisis presents the risk of oppressive or unjust policies offered under the pretext of "safety." This new reality should not be one of clandestine operations and fearmongering, but rather one of unprecedented transparency and education.

We invite you to join us in a new and thoughtful conversation, to learn about our Cordell Perspectives. Our inaugural Perspective is authored by Rachel Sachs, Cordell Institute Fellow and Associate Professor of Law here at Washington University, entitled "Innovation Policy and COVID-19." In her characteristically thoughtful essay, Professor Sachs explains the challenges that the pandemic raises for

the separate yet crucially related areas of intellectual property, food and drug, and health law. Future pieces will offer different methodological and geographic perspectives, from the limits of federal privacy law to the health experiences of chronically ill patients in the time of a pandemic, and the political and medical situations on the ground in early COVID-19 hotspots like Northern Italy and South Korea.

Our world really is changing. Let's talk about it together.