

# BIG TECH AND YOUR DATA



The Cambridge Analytica scandal rightfully set off a wave of scrutiny regarding data privacy, but the potential for further exploitation extends far beyond Google, Facebook and Twitter.

What should Congress ask Amazon about the stockpiles of personal data they collect on you?



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# Is Amazon using consumer browsing and purchasing histories to gain an unfair advantage over its competition?

Allegations that Amazon is using its droves of both purchasing and browsing data to undercut third-party sellers and small businesses to crowd them out of the marketplace are raising concerns.

## The New York Times

*"Amazon is utilizing its knowledge of its powerful marketplace machine — from optimizing word-search algorithms to analyzing competitors' sales data to using its customer-review networks — to steer shoppers toward its in-house brands and away from its competitors, say analysts."*

6/23/18

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

*"European Union antitrust authorities have begun a preliminary investigation into Amazon.com Inc.'s treatment of other merchants that sell products using its platform, opening a new regulatory front against an American tech giant."*

9/19/18

# Just what is Amazon doing with all that consumer behavior data, anyway?

Amazon is on track to be the third-largest digital advertiser in the U.S., just behind Google and Facebook. But unlike Google and Facebook, which give users the option to control what information is shared with third parties, Amazon gives users very limited flexibility regarding privacy.

## The New York Times

*"We can reach the right consumer at the right time using their wealth of data to target," Ms. McGurk said. "Other traditional digital platforms do not have the level of purchase data that Amazon has on their customers."*

9/3/18

## GeekWire

*"Amazon is in a unique position to challenge the online advertising duopoly of Facebook and Google because ... 'Google might know what you're interested in buying, Facebook might be able to deduce what you'd be inclined to buy, but Amazon knows what you've actually bought, or even whether you showed intent to buy.'"*

9/4/18

## Is Amazon taking privacy concerns about its smart-speaker Echo seriously, and have there been breaches that we don't know about?

Amazon's smart-speaker has already been caught recording private conversations, and the tech giant has patents pending that could make the Alexa-powered device even more invasive.

### **HUFFPOST**

*"The couple got a phone call...The message: 'Unplug your Alexa devices right now. You're being hacked.' ... 'You sat there talking about hardwood floors,' ... 'And we said, oh gosh, you really did hear us.'"*

5/24/18

### **internet of business**

*"Security researchers have discovered a vulnerability that enabled Amazon's voice assistant, Alexa, to listen in on people's conversations ... [they] created a skill for Alexa, in this case a calculator, that was able to record and transcribe everything a person said and send that data back to a third party."*

5/24/18

## Has Amazon heeded the lessons of Facebook's Cambridge Analytica scandal, or is the company leaving sensitive personal information vulnerable in the cloud?

Amazon's cloud storage, Simple Storage Service (S3), is notoriously vulnerable to data exposures. As the company makes a foray into greater responsibility hosting voter data and other sensitive information, questions need to be raised about its ability to safeguard this data from nefarious activity and prevent hacks or leaks.

### **Los Angeles Times**

*"UpGuard, a cybersecurity firm based in Mountain View, Calif., said it notified the county in April that it discovered exposed Social Security numbers, addresses and sensitive notes about calls regarding mental health and abuse... available for public download from an Amazon web server."*

5/17/18

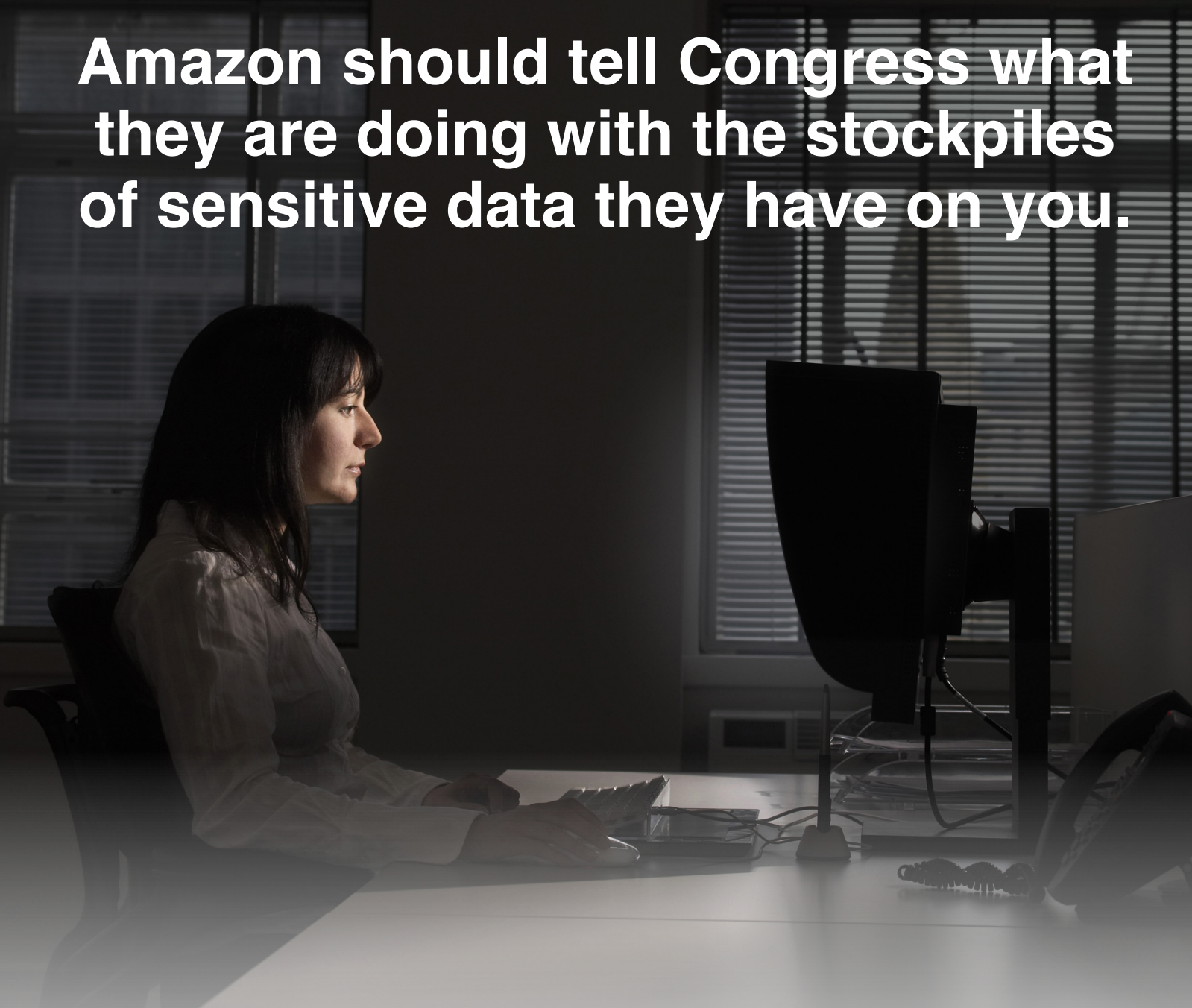
### **Business Insights**

*"The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) had an embarrassing run of leak announcements last fall that showed a likely systemic disregard for the risk posed by poorly configured Amazon S3 buckets"*

1/24/18



# Amazon should tell Congress what they are doing with the stockpiles of sensitive data they have on you.



The Free & Fair Markets Initiative (FFMI) is a non-profit coalition of businesses, consumer advocacy groups, workers and community activists committed to scrutinizing and highlighting emerging market trends that are stifling competition and innovation, influencing federal and local government spending, putting consumer data in harm's way and limiting consumer choice. Our vision is a modern, fair marketplace that serves the best interests of individual Americans and the nation as a whole.

Read our memo at:  
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