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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 4, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT

Report on National Information Policy;
Transfer of Privacy Committee Functions

The President reviewed your memorandum of September 14 on the above subject and made the following notation:

"Nelson just examined this Saturday.

I tentatively selected Option #2 and merger of Privacy Personnel but suggest check with Jim Lynn.

I will also check with him."

James E. Connor
Secretary to the Cabinet

cc: Dick Cheney
Jim Lynn

*(large blue notebook
is attachment)*

cc for Bob Lindley's renewal x

To V.P.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Nelson just sponsored
this Saturday.

2 selected options #2

& merger of Privacy Personnel
but suggest check with

Jim Lynn.

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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

September 14, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: THE VICE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Report on National Information Policy;
Transfer of Privacy Committee Functions

The Domestic Council Committee on the Right of Privacy (DCCRP), having completed its review of information policy in accordance with your directive of March 8, 1976, herewith submits its report entitled "National Information Policy."

This memorandum sets forth options relating to --

- 1) the findings and recommendations contained in the report (Part A, below) and,
- 2) the steps which are recommended in connection with the termination of the DCCRP, effective October 1, 1976 (Part B, below).

A. Report on National Information Policy

The Report --

° reviews the interrelationship of several public policy questions "generated by advances in computer and communications technology, by shifts in the United States economy from a manufacturing to an information base, and by citizen demands for clarification of their right to have and control information."

° finds that these interrelationships have not been adequately perceived and that the Federal Government, which must play a critical role in resolving questions of information policy, is not organized to provide answers in an effective and coordinated manner.

° recommends that the United States set as a goal the development of a "national information policy that is comprehensive, sufficiently sensitive to new technology and responsive to the implications of the Information Age."

° recommends that such policy be developed over time under the leadership of a policy-oriented organization within the Executive Office of the President (EOP) together with the creation of appropriate intergovernmental committees and non-Federal advisory bodies.

There are two options for expedited action which could be taken in connection with the Report. Both options involve merging the Privacy Committee into an Office of Information Policy.

OPTION ONE: Establish immediately an Office of Information Policy within the Executive Office of the President by expanding the authority of the Office of Telecommunications Policy (OTP) through the assignment of appropriate functions as outlined in the Report. This can be accomplished by executive order and can be financed within current budget levels.

OPTION TWO: Short of establishing an Office of Information Policy at this time, preliminary steps toward the type of consolidated approach sought in the Report could be taken. These steps could be coupled with further study of the appropriate organizational structure.

The Office of Telecommunications Policy provides a vehicle for this more limited approach. OTP could be assigned responsibility for coordinating a national information policy on a transitional basis, including responsibility for privacy issues within the Executive Branch (See Part B, below).

The Report could appropriately be made a part of the material now under review by the special Domestic Council task force which is considering the role of the Office of Telecommunications Policy.

Both OPTION ONE and OPTION TWO would require that OTP be given relief from current personnel ceilings for 5 to 10 additional positions to allow it to commence information policy activities without hampering ongoing activities.

Either option could be coupled with a Presidential statement announcing the action taken and releasing the Report. Such a statement could emphasize not only the impact which the Information Age is having on the lives of all Americans but also the opportunities which it presents if we move now to prepare for it. In this way, the Report provides an opportunity to stress the need for constant re-evaluation of governmental policy machinery to make it efficient and responsive to the major forces shaping national development.

Preferences:

OPTION ONE _____

OPTION TWO _____

DISCUSS _____



B. Merger of Privacy Committee with OTP

Privacy Committee staff will be terminated effective October 1 by the elimination of funds for the privacy support group from the FY '77 budget. If either of the two options above can be implemented prior to that date, it will assure a continuation of high level attention to privacy concerns, as called for in the Report.

However, to assure that such concerns do not lapse, I recommend that the ongoing functions of the Privacy Committee be merged with the Office of Telecommunications Policy in late September, prior to the expiration of the Committee on October 1, 1976. This can be accomplished by increasing the staff allocation for the Office of Telecommunications Policy (now 41) by 5 or more positions, which individuals would continue to monitor privacy issues and serve as a transitional unit should an Office of Information Policy be established under the options outlined in Part A, above.

As noted in Part A, this can be done within current budget levels. Should you desire to merge such functions, I would be pleased to make suggestions on the timing and content of a public statement

Approve MAF Disapprove _____ Discuss _____

Tentatively O.K.

To V.P.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Nelson just approved
this Saturday.

I selected option #2
& merger of Primary Personnel
but suggest check with
Jim Lynn.

I will also check
with him.



THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

September 14, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: THE VICE PRESIDENT *Walt*

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Bob Linder

For your review. You will note
the decision is just tentative.
This did not go in thru us - if it
had, we would have staffed it.

Please return.

Trudy Fry
10/5/76

