

## Mining Data

Jack Hall, a software developer for a large online retailer, was growing increasingly uncomfortable with his company's practices. While some of his company's executives had been publicly critical of the government collecting vast quantities of personal detail from email and online activity, the company was particularly aggressive about mining data from its own customers' online activity for marketing purposes.

Jack talked with one of his friends, who worked for a local university, about his concerns. The friend asked him three questions:

1. With whom does Jack have an ethical conflict – his company, or governmental policy, which permits what the company is doing?
2. Is having an ethical conflict with your employer a sign that Jack should leave the company?
3. What options are available to Jack and what should he do?

*(Case prepared by Kirk O. Hanson, Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, Santa Clara University, USA)*