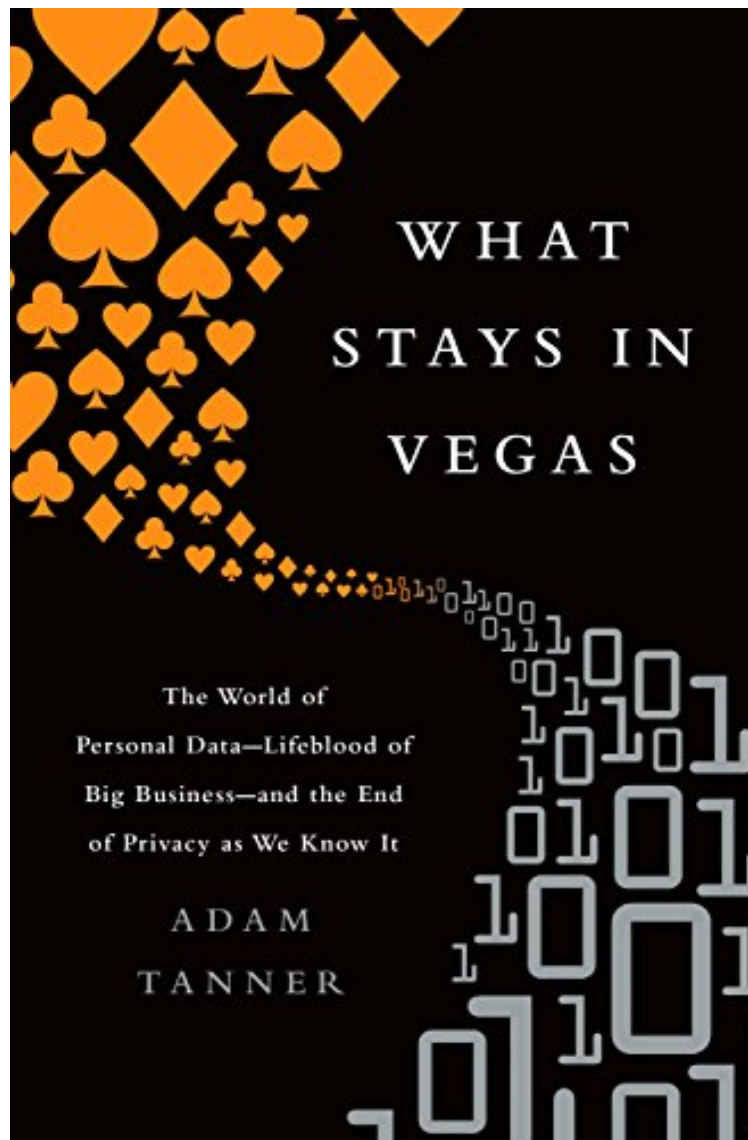


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What Stays in Vegas: The World of Personal Data—Lifeblood of Big Business—and the End of Privacy as We Know It

Adam Tanner

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Adam Tanner : What Stays in Vegas: The World of Personal Data—Lifeblood of Big Business—and the End of Privacy as We Know It before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised What Stays in Vegas: The World of Personal Data—Lifeblood of Big Business—and the End of Privacy as We Know It:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Beyond Vegas. By Fred Forbes. Thought I would find the use of personal data compiled by Caesar's Palace as a means to improve the client experience and retention interesting and did. Not quite the "insight" I was looking for in terms of gaming the system to increase the freebies (Not hard - bet more, lose more!). The book veered from the Vegas emphasis into the role of data brokers in today's economy and the issue of privacy and ethics as it relates to data disclosure and use. Interesting book, but a bit on the basic side; a bit more specificity would have been helpful.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The well-known tale of quants taking over Caesars gets a fresh, inviting look here. By Andy Orrock. "What Stays in Vegas" is a good read about the collection and use of personal data. The main thread of Adam Tanner's book is the well-known tale of Gary Loveman's unlikely ascendancy to the top of the pile at what was then Harrah's (now Caesars). Tanner got access to Loveman and his top ring of executives and makes good use of it. He details in clear, rich detail how Caesars compiles information on its customers, how it crafts offers and how uses that data/offer mix to attempt to optimize profit. As Tanner notes, "The best businesses give consumers a choice whether or not to share their data, and offer benefits in return. The trick for executives is to strike the right balance when offering incentives." Should we be put off by the fact that Caesars ultimately filed for bankruptcy? I say "no." That outcome was more a reflection of peak-LBO overreach by owners Apollo and TPG rather than any failings by the Loveman team. The level of debt service required post buyout just never made a lot of sense. And, any proposed trajectory to profitability were supremely and fully wrecked by global financial crisis of 2008/09. Other standout parts of the book are the passages concerning the various businesses that have sprung up around collecting and using personal information. I especially liked Tanner's reporting on Busted Mugshots, whose aggressive business model centers around collecting and posting jail photos, then removing them for a fee. Though clearly demonstrating a distaste for the practice, Tanner credits Busted for "becoming a leader in a field where the major players typically stay hidden, their stories unknown... [founder Kyle] Prall at least had the courage to tell his story in depth and in plain sight, unlike most of the others who traffic in damaging personal data." Indeed, Tanner's pages spent with Prall make for fascinating reading.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. It's not your personal business anymore.... and it darned sure isn't staying in Vegas! By Wormer. Topical. Well-researched. Some interesting and instructive observations on how "big data" is collected and used, both by company's we grant our permission to, as well as those we don't - or perhaps don't know we are. Some maybe not-so-obvious "problems" with all the collection, and concerns about whether it's all accurate and in context - and challenges getting it corrected when it's not. Couple chapters do kinda' run a little long and a couple points leave you wondering how they're connected when you read, but it's all summarized and pulled-together well. Even if you are aware of all these things and none leave you surprised that this type of thing is happening, when you put it all together like this and see its' connectedness and scope, it leaves you pondering and maybe a bit disconcerted about how hard it is to keep prying eyes and marketers outta' your personal business.

The greatest threat to privacy today is not the NSA, but good-old American companies. Internet giants, leading retailers, and other firms are voraciously gathering data with little oversight from anyone. In Las Vegas, no company knows the value of data better than Caesars Entertainment. Many thousands of enthusiastic clients pour through the ever-open doors of their casinos. The secret to the company's success lies in their one unrivaled asset: they know their clients intimately by tracking the activities of the overwhelming majority of gamblers. They know exactly what games they like to play, what foods they enjoy for breakfast, when they prefer to visit, who their favorite hostess might be, and exactly how to keep them coming back for more. Caesars' dogged data-gathering methods have been so successful that they have grown to become the world's largest casino operator, and have inspired companies of all kinds to ramp up their own data mining in the hopes of boosting their targeted marketing efforts. Some do this themselves. Some rely on data brokers. Others clearly enter a moral gray zone that should make American consumers deeply uncomfortable. We live in an age when our personal information is harvested and aggregated whether we like it or not. And it is growing ever more difficult for those businesses that choose not to engage in more intrusive data gathering to compete with those that do. Tanner's timely warning resounds: Yes, there are many benefits to the free flow of all this data, but there is a dark, unregulated, and destructive netherworld as well.

One of the Washington Post's 50 Notable Nonfiction Books of 2014 [A] masterpiece... Tanner's book is one of the best business books written this year; in fact, it is one of the best business books in this century. It reminds me of Joe Nocera's first book, *A Piece of the Action*, in that it combines detailed knowledge of his subject matter with an excellent writing style, countless personal interviews and observations of events. Don McNay, Huffington Post. "What Stays in Vegas" is an engrossing, story-packed takedown of the data industry. "What Stays in Vegas offers a narrative that transforms Big Data from spreadsheet-dull to a racy read people will pay attention to." Financial Times. "The book provides an insiders' look at the business of assembling, packaging and reselling data, and it uses glittery Las Vegas to show that kind of information at work." Dina Temple-Raston, Washington Post. "Mr. Tanner's engaging book is realistic." Marc Levinson, Wall Street Journal. "Although 'What Stays in Vegas' starts with insights gained from casino data, the book is even more interesting when it delves into the occasionally

questionable practices of other businesses that use personal data for profit.” Kim Ukura, Madison (WI) Capital Times [A] very readable account about our disappearing privacy. What Stays in Vegas is both readable and entertaining, and in a similar manner as Michael Lewis's writings, Tanner provides interesting stories about the people and companies that are now so directly involved in our personal lives.” Winnipeg Free Press I would recommend the Tanner book with the excellent title of What Stays in Vegas.” Inside Higher Ed A compelling read on what companies are doing, how they get our information, what they do with it, and how some business approaches are more respectful of privacy than others.” Irish Times Tanner illustrates his arguments with a traditional, vivid example from the business and entertainment world: Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. Tanner weaves this example into a gripping account of the modern direct-marketing industry. In this fascinating look at the dazzling if suffocating domain of digital information gathering, Tanner concludes that it is returning us to a world of farms and villages, where intimate details of everyone's lives were public knowledge.” Kirkus's, *starred* review Although What Stays in Vegas starts with insights gained from casino data, the book is even more interesting when it delves into the occasionally questionable practices of other businesses that use personal data for profit.” Capital Times, (Madison (WI)) Data may be to the 21st century economy what oil was to the 20th, a hugely valuable asset essential to economic life and often a source of conflict. This entertaining yet deeply informative book is a great guide to what has, or hasn't, happened and to what lies ahead.” Lawrence Summers, former Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, President Emeritus and Charles W. Eliot University Professor of Harvard University In Adam Tanner's fast-paced investigative report, What Stays in Vegas, we learn that the great advances of the digital age, access and interconnectedness, also carry great risks. Never before has information about one's identity been more valuable or easier to track for insights and advantage. As we continue gathering data to unlock the secrets of our pasts and futures, here's what I hope doesn't stay in Vegas: the need to read Tanner's book to figure out how to balance the promise of personalization against the threats posed to privacy. It's much too important a question to leave to the roll of dice.” Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Alphonse Fletcher University Professor of Harvard University