Wikipedia defines Big Data as “a broad term for [data sets](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Data_set) so large or complex that traditional [data processing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Data_processing) applications are inadequate. The term often refers simply to the use of [predictive analytics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Predictive_analytics) or other certain advanced methods to extract value from data.”

Got that? With so much of the world now online, businesses (as well as governments) are able to collect huge quantities of information on anyone.

But do we understand the implications of this access to lives? Data is collected from everywhere; from posts to social networking sites, from cell phone GPS signals, and from purchasing records.

The growth of this technology is outpacing public policy. Every day 2.5 quintillion bytes of data are created – 90% of data in the world today has been created in the past two years.

There are certainly benefits to Big Data: disease prevention, health care delivery, financial fraud prevention, and crime reduction.

But what is the harm of this invasion to our privacy? The harm is that you are already being categorized by your ethnicity, socioeconomic status and your health condition. Would you mind being classified as “Diabetes Interest” if it means getting coupons for sugar-free products?

You certainly would not be happy to have an insurance company use that information to classify you as a high risk.

# Philadelphia Area Coalition for Responsible Investment

## PACRI to Host a Climate Change Seminar

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*The Corporate Conscience*

### What is Big Data?

The Philadelphia Area Coalition for Responsible Investment has announced its intention to host a multi-session educational event on climate change.

Headlining as our plenary speaker is Sister Ilia Delio, OSF, a Franciscan sister from Washington DC. Sister Ilia is a theologian, writer, and dynamic speaker on a variety of topics related to religion, science, ecological consciousness and culture.

Concurrent panel discussions on investment policy and grassroots strategies will feature issue-area experts followed by a Q&A session will all the speakers.

The event, scheduled for November 21, 2015, will be held in Meagher Theater at Neumann University in Aston, PA. Doors will open at 8:45 AM, with the official program beginning at 9:15 AM.

The event is free and open to the public. Online registration will be available on November 2nd and is recommended to secure your seat.

For more information or to received updates, please contact Tom McCaney at tmccaney@osfphila.org.

Hope to see you all on November 21st!

Special points

of interest:

* Big Data is used by marketers to track, and predict spending habits.
* The “Digital Universe” doubles in size every two years.
* Consumers are being separated and categorized, defining their exposure to advertising.

Impact Investing has been practiced for decades by many religious communities and other socially conscious investors.

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## Impact Investing

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### Progress Report – Medicines Patent Pool

The Medicines Patent Pool is a United Nations-backed agency created in 2010 to provide greater access to life-saving medicines vital to the treatment of HIV. The MPP asked pharmaceutical companies to share (for a price) their patents on their formulations with the pool, allowing generic companies to produce and sell those drugs in areas where access is limited.

These patent-sharing licenses help to lower the prices of HIV medicines and facilitate the development of better-adapted HIV medicines.

 Initially, the large drug companies resisted the pool, fearing that their participation would put them at a disadvantage to their competitors.

But after a slow start, the pool now includes patents from Bristol-Myers Squibb, Merck, Gilead, Abbvie and others. To date, the MPP has signed agreements for 12 drugs for countries home to 87-94% of people living with HIV in the developing world.

With only a quarter of children living with HIV receiving therapy, the MPP and the access it provides is necessary.

Impact Investing is a relatively new term for a form of investments that seek positive social or environmental, as well as financial impacts. This “triple bottom line” of benefits separates it from other forms of Socially Responsible Investing, such as negative screening, AKA avoidance of stocks that are in conflict with an investor’s principles.

Community Investing, the precursor to Impact Investing, has been practiced for decades by many religious communities and other socially conscious investors. This includes providing capital through short-term, renewable loans, CDs and other instruments to community loan funds, affordable housing agencies, credit unions and educational services to borrowers in the U.S.

Additionally, investments in global organizations empower farmers, rural families and women through microfinance, fair trade support and help in organizing cooperatives.

Banks and other large institutional investors have recently discovered this market, and while this may change the landscape for other investors, it does provide additional capital to those that need it.

### The EU Takes On Conflict Minerals

The European Union (EU) is currently considering legislation requiring downstream users of conflict minerals to self-certify that these materials were not sourced from those involved in violent conflict. These minerals include tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold, and are used in a multitude of consumer products like cell phones, computers and other electronics.

The proposal is weak, asking importers of the 3 Ts and gold to self-regulate while requiring mandatory due diligence from smelters and refiners. The question must be raised: Is this the first step to stopping the flow of funds to violent militias in the Congo or show piece that fails to meaningfully address the problem?

The true beneficiaries of “climate-smart agriculture” are the industrial farmers and corporations that rule the current system.

Climate change and its potential effects on water and food supplies has risen in our planet’s collective consciousness. In the face of this warming world, scientists, activists, and other learned people have worked to develop technology and systems to promote a more sustainable approach to food.

Climate-smart agriculture (CSA) is an integrative approach to address the interlinked challenges of food security and climate change, and explicitly aims for three objectives:

a) Sustainably increasing agricultural productivity, to support equitable increases in farm incomes, food security and development;

b) Adapting and building resilience of agricultural and food security systems to climate change at multiple levels; and

c) Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture (including crops, livestock and fisheries).

Agroecology is defined as “a whole-systems approach that links ecology, culture, economics, and society to sustain agricultural production, healthy environments, and viable food and farming communities. It is designed for the purpose of rebuilding decentralized, just, and sustainable agricultural systems.

The two approaches would seem to go hand-in-hand. They both list food insecurity, poverty reduction and sustainable natural resource management as priority issues. Their websites promote paths to higher yields, lower emissions, equitable opportunities, and plans tailored to local communities.

Their similarities, however, end there. A rift has developed, with supporters of agroecology accusing the CSA approach of expanding carbon markets and serving the interests of agribusiness and the financial markets. Critics see the CSA as a newer version of the Green Revolution of the 1940s and the World Bank’s Poverty Reduction projects of the 1970s and 1980s; projects based on increased use of toxic chemicals, dependent on fossil fuel inputs and technology, increasing exploitation of agricultural and rural workers, and a resulting loss of biodiversity.

The result of these previous efforts has been the loss of food security and sovereignty, transforming entire countries that were once net food exporters into net food importers. It is not so much that they cannot produce food, but instead, they produce commodity crops used to produce industrialized foods, fuels, manufactured products for sale, and for speculation in the world financial markets.

The true beneficiaries of this “Climate-Smart Agriculture”, which is promoted by the World Bank and the (FAO) UN Food and Agriculture Organization, are the industrial farmers and corporations that rule the current system.

Sustainability will only be achieved when we honestly address the issues of poverty, climate change and peoples’ inability to feed themselves.

*Tom McCaney*

## Agroecology vs. Climate-Smart Agriculture

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The Philadelphia Area Coalition for Responsible Investment is an alliance of socially responsible shareholders who view the management of their investments as a catalyst to promote justice and sustainability in the world. We are a member organization of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) and our membership consists of religious communities, colleges and universities, health system, dioceses, hospice organization, financial services corporation, and individuals.

### About PACRI

The importance of voting the issues presented on your investments’ proxy statement cannot be over-stated.

Whether it’s the election of Board members, the compensation of executive officers, equity incentive plans, or the multitude of issues presented in shareholder proposals, your vote in the one chance most average shareholders have to raise their voices.

The issues presented can sometimes be confusing. Which Board candidates are most qualified? Will the impending merger benefit shareholders, the company, the greater good? Will the shareholder proposals promote long-term sustainability?

To receive advice on all matters presented in a proxy statement, several socially responsible investment organizations, such as Calvert and CBIS, have published guidelines for responsible investing.

***PHILADELPHIA AREA COALITION FOR RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT***

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## Proxy Voting - Make Your Voice Heard

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