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#### Essay #4

Databases are systems used to find out certain things about a big list of information without going through the whole list looking for that one particular thing. Using databases they can use queries to find that information. There are many types of databases they range from simple things such as phonebooks and stretch to more complex things such as databases used in large corporations used to keep employee information and things such as pay information and history of the company. Databases are especially important in large corporations, can you imagine what business would be like without databases, businesses would be extremely hindered, because of the time it would take to find information. This is why databases although they seem to be insignificant, the world is highly dependent upon them.

Although databases are helpful they are often misused. Like for example this situation, “The 13-year-old daughter of a hospital records clerk in Jacksonville, Fla., used her mother's computer during an office visit and printed out names and numbers of patients previously treated in the hospital's emergency room. According to police, she then telephoned seven people and falsely told them that they were infected by the HIV virus. One person attempted suicide after the call. Upon arrest, the girl told police the calls were just a prank.<sup>1</sup>” This is a perfect situation of Database misuse, it is important that when a company possesses a database with personal information that the make sure there is security on it, and only certain people in the company who have a need to see that information should have access.

The fact of the matter is personal information shouldn't be available to anyone unless you sign a contract allowing them to see it. For example telemarketers should not be able to access your phone number unless you allow them to. Databases should be used as a tool to help and must be monitored for privacy reasons.

- 1. Website: <http://md.hudora.de/blog/guids/95/27/15200212031115273595.html>  
Source: \_Communications of the ACM\_, Volume 38, Number 5, May 1995.