



## What is Personally Identifiable Information (PII)?

The term “PII” is defined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in OMB Circular A-130, *Managing Information as a Strategic Resource* (July 2016) as:

Information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual’s identity, either alone or when combined with other information that is linked or linkable to a specific individual.

It is important to recognize that non-PII can become PII whenever additional information is made publicly available—in any medium and from any source—that, when combined with other available information, could be used to identify an individual.

PII includes any information that can identify a person:

- Whether or not the information is subject to the Privacy Act (not all PII falls under the Privacy Act);
- Whether or not the information is publicly available, e.g., online/internet;
- Whether the individuals are employees, members of the public research subjects, or business partners;
- Whether it identifies an individual in his/her personal or professional/work capacity; and
- Whether it is provided voluntarily or collected by mandate.

### Examples of PII<sup>i</sup>

This is NOT an exhaustive list. PII includes information about an individual linked or linkable to one of the below, e.g., **date of birth, place of birth, race, religion, weight, activities, geographical indicators, employment information, medical information, education information, financial information**).

Name	Telephone number (work & personal)
Date of birth	Email address (work & personal)
Maiden name	Mailing address (work & personal)
Mother’s maiden name	Photographic images
Alias	X-rays
Social Security number	Fingerprints
Passport number	Biometric identifiers (e.g., fingerprint, retina scan, voice signature, facial geometry)
Driver’s license number	Vehicle Identifiers, information identifying personally owned property, such as vehicle registration number
Taxpayer ID number	Education Records
Patient ID number	Job title + Employer
Financial account/credit card number	Military Status
Device Identifiers	Access credentials (e.g., username, password)
Internet Protocol (IP) address	Employment Status
Media Access Control (MAC) address	Medical Records numbers
Any host-specific static identifiers that link to a particular person or small, well-defined group of people	



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<sup>i</sup> Source: These examples are drawn from DOD 5400.11-R “Department of Defense Privacy Program”, National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) 800-122 Guide to Protecting the Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and OMB M-07-16 Safeguarding Against and Responding to the Breach of Personally Identifiable Information and Circular A-130 Managing Information as a Strategic Resource.