Lenovo Late Night IT

Season 2

E4 Data - As-produced Final Transcript

E4 Data

Michelle Finner...: So my point is, technology is never neutral. It's either positive, or it's negative. And so even though we'll have more and more and more data processing capabilities, we have to constantly be mindful that context is constantly being a driver of what is it that we're collecting. How does that impact the human, that's just navigating our way as our little carbon spaceships?

Baratunde Thurs...: Welcome to Lenovo Late Night IT, where I sit down with the top minds in tech for unfiltered conversations about trending topics. I'm your host, Baratunde Thurston. Tonight we're talking about big data, how it's used, how it's abused, and what we can do to take ownership of our online identities.

With us is Beverly Jackson, an award-winning marketing executive with 25 years of global experience in consumer tech, gaming, entertainment and hospitality. Most recently she was vice president of global brand and consumer marketing at Twitter, where she earned her blue check mark the old fashioned way, not for $8. Beverly is known for delivering on high impact goals with a data forward approach. She's also an avid traveler, who's been to 28 countries and five out of the seven continents. Why is she skipping those other two? We'll find out.

Also here tonight, Michelle Finneran Dennedy, CEO of Privacy Code, an early stage venture that plans, measures and maps privacy engineering solutions. An advisor to numerous tech organizations, Michelle is also a partner at Privatus Consulting, where she helps clients build and accelerate data protection practices. Prior to that, she was the chief privacy officer at Cisco. Here's a fun fact about Michelle. The guy who wrote The Usual Suspects was her high school sweetheart and he named the character, Edie Finneran, after her. Now, if I remember correctly, Edie Finneran dies a horrible death at the end of The Usual Suspects, so I got to know, was it a bad breakup? Michelle, Beverly, welcome to the show.

Beverly Jackson: Thank you.

Michelle Finner...: Thank you.

Baratunde Thurs...: Thank you all for being with me. I want to start off with just how valuable data might be. We've heard it called the new oil, and I'm curious from each of you if you think that metaphor is actually appropriate?

Michelle Finner...: Oh, let me clear this up. There I was in 2002 in Brussels. I was speaking to some commissioners. I said to the commission, "Data is the new oil, except that it is not." So I am always misquoted.

Baratunde Thurs...: They took off the back half of that.

Michelle Finner...: Except that it is not. Because, while oil and other commodities are valuable, oil is essentially dead dinosaur. One molecule is similar to the other. Data is a currency. If I gave you a green square or a rectangle, you would understand what it was because we have an agreement. But no one really knows what money is worth. It changes where you are and who you are and who's holding it. So data about human beings is time based, it's continuum based, it's permission based. Data about human beings and human stories is a lot like currency, and that's why data, and particularly data privacy, is such a valuable thing.

Baratunde Thurs...: So currency maybe more than oil?

Michelle Finner...: Absolutely.

Baratunde Thurs...: Do you have a different metaphor to share with us?

Beverly Jackson: No, I think currency is right. I think the idea that your life and your experiences go up in value and come down in value, and even after you're gone from this planet your data remains and there is some residual value to bad actors and even to newborns, people that are just new to the earth who don't even have a footprint or life yet, their data is of some value to bad actors, I think. I think that It varies from place to place but I think that's actually right.

Baratunde Thurs...: Okay. Out with the oil, in with the new currency.

Michelle Finner...: Absolutely.

Baratunde Thurs...: There were a lot of promises made about the value of big data. You were supposed to get all kinds of insights. You're supposed

to, if you're a business operator, know your customer better, know your competition, optimize the production of inventories so you're not over producing things based on real time demand. Yada, yada, yada. To what degree it has the promise of big data and all it was supposed to do get oversold?

Beverly Jackson: I don't think it's been oversold. The marketer in me doesn't think it's been oversold at all. You get all of those things. You walk into a room and Alexa knows that you need dog food and knows what kind of dog food you need.

Baratunde Thurs...: But what if I don't have a dog?

Beverly Jackson: You have a dog. You wanted a dog.

Baratunde Thurs...: And Alexa bought me a dog.

Beverly Jackson: Alexa said you want to have a dog in your life.

Baratunde Thurs...: But you think it's mostly working?

Beverly Jackson: I think it's working. I think that the promise of data and what it can do to improve an individual consumer's life has pretty much paid off.

Baratunde Thurs...: So paid off.

Beverly Jackson: Paid off.

Baratunde Thurs...: For who?

Beverly Jackson: Paid off for the brands. Paid off for the companies. Paid off for the people selling your data. The issue that we have right now is, I don't know that I want you selling me, and I don't know that I ever agreed to allow you to have that much access to me and that much ability to market me. I agreed to let you market to me. I didn't agree to let you market me. And that's the difference.

Michelle Finner...: Yeah. I feel itchy about how well they're doing.

Baratunde Thurs...: Great. Let's go.

Michelle Finner...: I feel like after I've bought my shoes, I'm tired of being remarketed the same pair of shoes.

Baratunde Thurs...: That you just bought.

Michelle Finner...: That I just bought.

Baratunde Thurs...: Yeah. It's a coupon after you bought the eggs.

Michelle Finner...: Yeah.

Beverly Jackson: That's just bad marketing, y'all.

Michelle Finner...: It's bad marketing.

Baratunde Thurs...: It's a constant experience of it.

Michelle Finner...: Yeah.

Beverly Jackson: I almost violently, but I won't because I'm a pacifist.

Baratunde Thurs...: Great.

Michelle Finner...: She's very close.

Baratunde Thurs...: She's a pacifist who's almost not.

Michelle Finner...: I know.

Beverly Jackson: Almost not.

Michelle Finner...: She has a cup that's metal.

Baratunde Thurs...: It's very hard.

Beverly Jackson: I didn't threaten to flip over the table. I don't agree that... That's bad marketing. So let me say it this way.

Michelle Finner...: That's a lot of it, though.

Beverly Jackson: There's a lot of bad marketing, but there are good marketers out here-

Michelle Finner...: There are.

Beverly Jackson: ... who understand what the customer wants and needs and what's next, who understands how to move a customer along that journey, who understands how to take those little pieces of data and bring that customer to a place where the brand meets their needs. The problem that we have is that we have so violated people's privacy and their data, and people didn't know exactly what they signed up for, that it feels icky. That's the part that feels icky. And amateurs, you wouldn't pitch 100 mile an hour fast ball to a little leaguer. That's what happens when bad marketers get access to the holy grail.

Michelle Finner...: Yeah.

Beverly Jackson: And that's what you feel.

Baratunde Thurs...: I think to me that seems to be an extraordinary almost land grab for data without necessarily needing it. It's almost a preemptive strike.

Michelle Finner...: It's poor quality data, too.

Baratunde Thurs...: If I install an app, it wants all of my contacts, all of my photo history, and I just want to be able to shop. It's like, why do you need all of that to do your job? If you're an IT leader, many of them I suspect feel like they have to do that. But are we to a point where there's actually too much data-

Michelle Finner...: Yes.

Baratunde Thurs...: ... to create the necessary amount of actionable insights to move your business forward?

Beverly Jackson: This seems to be a consensus here. There's a lot of data. There's a lot of bad marketing. And to your point, I always know when I'm in another country with one of my loony marketing ideas, because it usually pushes me back in the box that I belong in. I can always feel like as a marketer when I've overstepped. So that does happen. But there is probably a ton of low quality data. There's probably an overreach in the collection of data that you don't need to do the thing that is the promise between consumer and brand. But I feel like that happened when product managers, engineering folks, IT folks say, "But what about the next innovation? I might need it."

Baratunde Thurs...: I might need it.

Beverly Jackson: I might need it.

Baratunde Thurs...: It's hoarding.

Beverly Jackson: It's a hoarding.

Michelle Finner...: Yes. Yes.

Beverly Jackson: It's a hoarding. So they're buried alive under the data and you don't know what you might need.

Michelle Finner...: They forget it's currency.

Beverly Jackson: That's right.

Michelle Finner...: And I'll give you an example. I went to one of these data science conferences, and this fellow is sitting on the stage and he's like, "Well, and we gathered this and this and this. And then when people buy this stuff and there's no scent in it. And then they buy this kind of cream and they put it on during the first trimester. We know or we think that that person might be pregnant, and then we send coupons." I was like, I have made humans with this vehicle. Why didn't you ask moms? We've been making people for a long time.

Baratunde Thurs...: So you're inferring things. There's a shorter path to the answer in all of this.

Michelle Finner...: Ask a girl.

Baratunde Thurs...: Yeah.

Beverly Jackson: That's what happens when you're like-

Baratunde Thurs...: That's hard for a lot of engineers.

Michelle Finner...: Yeah.

Beverly Jackson: Yes.

Michelle Finner...: Stop looking at my shoes and look up here.

Beverly Jackson: Well, that's what you said. When the engineers don't look like the people making the product, right?

Michelle Finner...: Talk to people. And then use data experiments. Because I love data.

Baratunde Thurs...: I love that point, because it does feel like a lot of the activity in data collection and analysis is a guessing game, that you could find the answer by other means. Instead of trying to anticipate everything a person might want and outing them or getting something wrong, you could just ask.

Michelle Finner...: You could just ask.

Beverly Jackson: But no one has time to staff a research department or fund a focus group.

Beverly Jackson: Don't I really have enough data signals from the mobile device that's in your pocket that's with you at all times? What's the probability that I'm going to get it wrong?

Michelle Finner...: And if I store the data for 20 years, don't I really know when you need that beer at the football game

Baratunde Thurs...: Both of these concepts, the age of it, the volume of data and the aging of it-

Michelle Finner...: Quality.

Baratunde Thurs...: ... has an effect on quality. What infrastructure does the business need to have in place to make use of the data in the best possible way? So hoarding is one method, but that's expensive as well.

Michelle Finner...: It is.

Baratunde Thurs...: You're keeping servers running, you're taking up hard drive space, you're filtering through a lot of noise, and then things get old. Is there a technological or other business process to put in place to manage that and get more value from your data?

Michelle Finner...: Yes. I'm deeply biased here.

Baratunde Thurs...: Okay.

Michelle Finner...: Okay. This is what privacy code does.

Baratunde Thurs...: Oh, perfect.

Michelle Finner...: We groom, groom, groom, groom, curate, curate, curate. I am a huge believer of looking at what are the fair principles of data? We ask permission.

Baratunde Thurs...: Step one.

Michelle Finner...: We think about how long the context is. Context changes. When I'm in my doctor's office it might be that I'm talking about keeping a record because it's a long lasting thing. I may be talking about a boil that is removed, I don't need to have that forever. Minimization. What is the most effective thing in time? Person who wanted Taylor Swift ticket who did not have it. Hey Taytay.

Beverly Jackson: Good luck with that.

Michelle Finner...: Help a girl. I got a 16 year old daughter who's very angry. Deletion. Embrace the delete, my friends.

Baratunde Thurs...: You can delete data?

Michelle Finner...: Let me tell you, we were given a pack of lies at the turn of the last century. As part of Moore's Law, it was like everything's going to be twice the capacity and half the price. And we tacked on storage is going to be super cheap, because guess who told you that? People who sold storage stuff. I was one of them.

Baratunde Thurs...: Oh wow.

Michelle Finner...: Yes.

Baratunde Thurs...: The call's coming from the inside the house.

Michelle Finner...: She lied to us.

Baratunde Thurs...: She lied to us.

Michelle Finner...: Well, we didn't lie. We were selling you that stuff, and we wanted to sell more of it. And we did.

Michelle Finner...: Stop buying so much. We tend to tell you to buy all that stuff. And it is cheap to keep spinning the discs, except that it costs a lot of power for the planet to do it. And you're losing quality. I keep hounding on quality, because it's not just privacy. And I can't believe as a privacy person, I just put just in front of it.

Baratunde Thurs...: It's okay.

Michelle Finner...: But I'm with a beautiful marketing goddess.

Baratunde Thurs...: Is there any shortcut? Because as we move more digital, we necessarily generate more at least observable data and capable data. So if I walk down the street in 1950, or today, I'm doing the same thing. But today I've got a phone on me, I've got a smart watch on me, there's cameras, to your earlier point. There's a lot more quantifiable, collectable data associated with that walk than there was decades ago when it was just somebody's memory of me walking down the street if they happen to see me. That lives somewhere in a database.

If I'm running a business and I've got all these tools and every transaction, the amount of time somebody spent pausing between keystrokes, I could lose myself in data and the derivatives of data. Is there a sorting function for someone to apply to help find the value of what's even worth it, versus just collecting because the system outputs it?

Beverly Jackson: Well, I think, so two parts to that. I think if I were to sort of paraphrase it, I was thinking about it as the hierarchy of data value. Right?

Baratunde Thurs...: Yes. Maslow's hierarchy of data needs.

Beverly Jackson: There you go. And so you talked about the smart watch, the phone, the cameras, but you forgot about the satellites whirling around that are tracking-

Baratunde Thurs...: Well, I didn't forget. I don't like to talk about that.

Beverly Jackson: Okay. We'll just talk about that. And it's where the pieces of data exist. And what it is that I'm hoping to accomplish with that. Right? And so I'm from Chicago, and I think about places in the neighborhood that I grew up in that have lots of data signals. And those data signals are being used to manage crime.

Baratunde Thurs...: Yes.

Beverly Jackson: I may or may not, depending on where I am, I may actually want as many pieces of that data to be coming as quickly as possible to as many pertinent sources as possible. I want it to be as near real time, and the best possible quality as we can absolutely get. Because life or death may matter. Right? If it is about selling you the difference between a Nathan's hot dog, no disrespect to Nathan's, a Nathan's hot dog or a Chicago famous Italian sausage with onions and peppers on it, it doesn't really matter.

Michelle Finner...: Oh, it matters.

Beverly Jackson: Well-

Baratunde Thurs...: The data you collect.

Beverly Jackson: The data you collect, and how much of it, and the quality of it, and how quickly it comes. My memory of that may just be as good as the guy who served you the hot dog every Saturday when your dad took you to the game. Right? And he just remembers you like mustard and relish, and you don't want ketchup on your hot dog. That might as good as you could possibly get, and it warms your heart. But I don't know that I want Gladys on the corner trying to tell me whether or not that guy was the drug dealer, and her being the determining factor if the cops get him.

Michelle Finner...: Right.

Beverly Jackson: I want big data to help me in that instance. I want every little piece of data that can be collected if life and limb are at risk.

Baratunde Thurs...: Got it.

Beverly Jackson: And I don't know if it's hot dog or death, but you know.

Baratunde Thurs...: That's quite a choice.

Michelle Finner...: It's quite a choice. But it's interesting because, and I hate to throw down the buzzwords, we're going to throw down a buzz.

Beverly Jackson: Let's get it.

Michelle Finner...: Quantum is coming. So when we have the ability to compute so many data points simultaneously, in 1950s it was how fast can your pencil scratch against a piece of paper, versus now, how many sensors, satellite, phone, how much digital input. Are there sensors in the pavement as there are in some Scandinavian countries? They have. And then it's also who is processing, and for what purpose? So there's a study in Berkeley, it's quite famous, of what are the recidivist and crime statistics of possession of marijuana before it was legalized in California. And so they're looking at Oakland, and what's the recidivist value of marijuana use? And they're finding all these young men in Oakland, and oh my goodness, and ooh, ooh, ooh. It turns out that when you observe things, you find those things.

Baratunde Thurs...: Yeah.

Michelle Finner...: So my point is, technology is never neutral. It's either positive, or it's negative. And so even though we'll have more and more and more data processing capabilities, we have to constantly be mindful that context is constantly being a driver of what is it that we're collecting. How does that impact the human, that's just navigating our way as our little carbon spaceships?

Baratunde Thurs...: Here's where I want to go. I want to take a break. I want to play a game. I want to see how well you can identify various terms and buzzwords from this wicked industry of big data. We'll give you cards. You'll hold those cards up, and the other person will try to guess what's on the card without saying the name.

Michelle Finner...: Okay.

Beverly Jackson: What's on the card without saying the name?

Baratunde Thurs...: Yes. So-

Beverly Jackson: I'm fairly certain I'm not smart enough to play it.

Baratunde Thurs...: You're going to do great. It's a collaborative game. You'll have about a minute to get through as many as possible. Then you'll switch roles.

Michelle Finner...: Okay.

Baratunde Thurs...: Are you ready? The only answer is yes.

Michelle Finner...: Yes.

Beverly Jackson: Yes.

Michelle Finner...: Yes and yes.

Baratunde Thurs...: Thank you.

Baratunde Thurs...: So Michelle, I'm going to have you start, in terms of holding the cards. I'm going to count down from three, and then you'll start. And y'all will have collectively a minute to get through as many as possible. You're just trying to explain the thing without saying the thing.

Michelle Finner...: Okay.

Baratunde Thurs...: Three, two, one. Let's go.

Beverly Jackson: It's the place where you put the old school floppy disc.

Michelle Finner...: Hard drive. That's not really what that is.

Baratunde Thurs...: You got it though.

Beverly Jackson: It's the thing that you need to be encrypted so no one steals your data.

Michelle Finner...: That's the hard drive.

Baratunde Thurs...: Or ... Keep trying.

Beverly Jackson: Or it's the thing that is a host of symbols, and letters, and words.

Michelle Finner...: Memory?

Beverly Jackson: No, I want to use ...

Michelle Finner...: Hardware?

Beverly Jackson: I want to make sure that my bank account is protected.

Michelle Finner...: Protected?

Beverly Jackson: Most people aren't encrypting it. They're just putting a set of symbols and letters in for nine or 10 of them, or 13 of them.

Michelle Finner...: Password?

Baratunde Thurs...: Whoa.

Beverly Jackson: Yes.

Baratunde Thurs...: We worked real hard for that one, which is the way it should be for password. Let's go.

Beverly Jackson: Yes. I don't want you to steal my-

Michelle Finner...: Information?

Beverly Jackson: Who I am.

Michelle Finner...: Personal information? Identity?

Beverly Jackson: Yes.

Baratunde Thurs...: We'll give it to you.

Beverly Jackson: There you go. Okay, thank you. Thank you.

Baratunde Thurs...: All right. Last one.

Beverly Jackson: It lives up in the sky. It's where everything is.

Michelle Finner...: Cloud?

Baratunde Thurs...: Yes. All right. Stop right there. That was pretty good.

Michelle Finner...: Geez. That was really good.

Baratunde Thurs...: I really like that password was the hardest one to crack. That's really cool. That's really cool. All right, let's pause for breath. How are you feeling?

Michelle Finner...: Nervous?

Baratunde Thurs...:	How are you feeling?
Beverly Jackson:	Wait. Okay. I'm putting this on my head.
Baratunde Thurs...:	Yeah. When you're going to-
Beverly Jackson:	And she's going to tell me ...
Baratunde Thurs...:	Yes. And you're just going to hold it up, and listen to her.
Beverly Jackson:	Okay.
Baratunde Thurs...:	Three, two, one.
Michelle Finner...:	I'm nervous.
Baratunde Thurs...:	Go. Let us both see it.
Michelle Finner...:	Okay. This is how you look for things when you're online.
Beverly Jackson:	I search.
Michelle Finner...:	This is how you do that. This is what you use to do this.
Beverly Jackson:	A browser?
Michelle Finner...:	Yes.
Baratunde Thurs...:	Yes.
Michelle Finner...:	This is the thing that people use so that they don't get stuff that people like you send to us.
Beverly Jackson:	Web ... Ad blocker?
Michelle Finner...:	Yes.
Baratunde Thurs...:	Yes, yes.
Michelle Finner...:	These are the people with the black hoodies and the-
Beverly Jackson:	Hackers.
Michelle Finner...:	Yes.
Baratunde Thurs...:	That could have been so many people. She went straight to hacker.
Michelle Finner...:	This is something quite delicious. Chocolate chip, and I put it on my machine so I can track where you go. everything.

Beverly Jackson: Cookies.

Baratunde Thurs...: Yes. Yum, yum, yum. Nom, nom, nom..

Michelle Finner...: Nom, nom, nom. This is something, they're sometimes glass, and you can look through them, but this one is actually, you can obscure, You cover up the glass one. You have one of these in your-

Beverly Jackson: Curtain?

Michelle Finner...: Sort of. Yes.

Beverly Jackson: Privacy window?

Michelle Finner...: It's very, very close.

Baratunde Thurs...: I'm going to give it to you, privacy window.

Michelle Finner...: In cognito.

Baratunde Thurs...: And we're going to call the game right there. Both of y'all have some work to do on simplifying your communication.

Michelle Finner...: It's in neato, it’s incognito.

Baratunde Thurs...: It was just because we already did web browser.

Michelle Finner...: Yeah.

Baratunde Thurs...: I thought you ... But she stuck with the window. She's like keeping it in the real world. I don't know that I would ever use that word in the real world. I only think of it in a browser kind of way.

Michelle Finner...: Yeah.

Baratunde Thurs...: That was so much fun to watch. Thank you for playing along with our game. Let's get these cards out of here.

SEGMENT ENDS

Baratunde Thurs...: And I want us to end on what we might create. So, there is more than just peril associated with analyzing big data, with deploying it for machine learning and artificial intelligence. What are some of your hopes for what we might do with this that would benefit... What are some of your hopes for what we might do with this to benefit society? Michelle.

Michelle Finner...: I actually think because we are relentless innovators and just plain old fashioned greed, I think there's so much promise and innovation and interesting things to do with data and kids that have grown up as digital natives, that plain old fashioned innovation is going to create community. I think all of the things that we've been talking about are exciting. I think creating environments where we can trust new sources and critical thinking and critical thinkers are interesting.

I think having places that we can go and friendships that are forged in social networks that we can trust that aren't surveillance engines are pleasing. So, I think those types of environments are going to spawn what's next, and it's a next wave. And I think that is the promise of what's next is, I don't think privacy is dead at all. And if it is, it's the sexiest zombie that ever lived.

Baratunde Thurs...: I want to twist the question slightly for you, Beverly, because I think we've created so much of this internet to monetize it and to sell things on it. And there's so much more we could be doing than selling things on it. So, with that spirit in mind, what else can we do with it?

Beverly Jackson: We can bring cultures together, we can learn, we can educate, we can uplift, we can end wars, we can solve big problems. We have an incentive and we have access to technology and data at a speed we've never had it before. And I don't think about young people as digital natives. I think about them as data natives. I think about them as privacy natives. I think about them as innovation natives because they have a momentum, a drive that past generations and current generations don't have. They want to get there faster. And with that, they're going to use the data points, they're going to use the data signals, they're going to use their drive and their infinite curiosity to bring those things to bear that are going to create safer places, more lucrative places. From a health perspective, safer communities where we can grow things and we can feed each other and we can learn things and we can bring cultures that have been disparate closer together.

The reason I've only been to five of the seven continents is because I just haven't had enough time yet. But that's the promise of this for me, is to bring the world just a little bit closer to solve big problems. And maybe you buy something useful along the way.

Baratunde Thurs...:	Yes. Thank you so much for being here. I have learned a lot. I have laughed a lot. I have enjoyed you both very, very much.
Michelle Finner...:	Thank you so much.
Beverly Jackson:	Thank you for having us.
Baratunde Thurs...:	That's it for tonight's episode of Lenovo Late Night IT. Thanks to our guest, Michelle-Fenner [inaudible 02:09:00] and Beverly Jackson. I'm Baratunde Thurston and I'll see you next time.