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Nota di contenuto	Front Matter -- Preface -- Acknowledgments -- Contents -- Summary -- 1 Importance and Use of Scientific and Technical Databases -- 2 Incentives and Disincentives Affecting the Availability and Use of Scientific and Technical Databases -- 3 Access to and Protections for Databases: Existing Policies and Approaches -- 4 Assessment and Recommendations -- APPENDIX A Biographical Sketches of Committee Members -- APPENDIX B Workshop Agenda and Participants -- APPENDIX C Workshop Proceedings- Listing of Contents -- Appendix D European Union Directive on the Legal Protection of Databases.
Sommario/riassunto	New legal approaches, such as the European Union's 1996 Directive on the Legal Protection of Databases, and other legal initiatives now being considered in the United States at the federal and state level, are threatening to compromise public access to scientific and technical data available through computerized databases. Lawmakers are struggling to strike an appropriate balance between the rights of database rights holders, who are concerned about possible commercial

misappropriation of their products, and public-interest users of the data such as researchers, educators, and libraries. A Question of Balance examines this balancing act. The committee concludes that because database rights holders already enjoy significant legal, technical, and market-based protections, the need for statutory protection has not been sufficiently substantiated. Nevertheless, although the committee opposes the creation of any strong new protective measures, it recognizes that some additional limits against wholesale misappropriation of databases may be necessary. In particular, a new, properly scoped and focused U.S. statute might provide a reasonable alternative to the European Union's highly protectionistic database directive. Such legislation could then serve as a legal model for an international treaty in this area. The book recommends a number of guiding principles for such possible legislation, as well as related policy actions for the administration.
