Department for
Digital, Culture,
Media & Sport

Policy paper

National Data Strategy open call for evidence

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Contents

1. National Data Strategy

In June 2018, the Secretary of State for the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) announced the UK Government's intention to develop a National Data Strategy that would unlock the power of data across government and the wider economy, while building citizen trust in its use.

The aim of the National Data Strategy is to drive the collective vision that will support the UK to build a world-leading data economy. It will help ensure that all citizens and organisations trust the data ecosystem, are sufficiently skilled to operate effectively within it, and can get access to high-quality data when they need it.

Today's digital revolution is driven by the use of data. The world's growing digital economy is defined by vastly improved technologies and the increasing use of artificial intelligence underpinned by richer and more granular data.

Data - understood in its broadest meaning - is an area that the government must get right. It plays a key role as a cornerstone and enabler of the UK digital strategy, industrial strategy, and transformation strategy. Government needs to lead the way, ensuring that the wider economy is supported and that public services are delivering the best possible outcomes to the public.

Government must consider what needs to be done to allow the power of data to

be unlocked for all elements of society and the economy. This includes the many ethical questions that arise around the use of data, ensuring the most effective use of data is fair and benefits all citizens.

In creating a National Data Strategy we want to maximise the positive impact that data can help us achieve, with a focus on people and the places where they live. We believe the best way to get our strategy right is to hear as many voices as possible.

2. Open call for evidence

This is an open call for evidence for the UK government's National Data Strategy.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) leads across government on data-related policy issues, both within Government and the wider economy. This is a broad, wide-reaching remit and we will be in a continual process of engagement throughout the Strategy development to ensure that views across society, economy and government are taken into account.

Through this call for evidence we will consult on the parameters and objectives of the strategy and gather evidence that will underpin a draft strategy. We will run a full consultation on that draft strategy later in 2019.

Please let us know of any relevant information, studies, reviews, statistics, grey literature, measures or metrics that you feel will support the evidence that will inform the National Data Strategy.

We're interested in being made aware of evidence from a broad range of stakeholders.

Whilst we will mainly focus our activity on engaging with academics, civil society, bodies that represent citizens, bodies that represent smaller businesses and start-ups, and the wider public sector; we also encourage members of the public to get in touch.

We welcome written submissions by email to nationaldatastrategy@culture.gov.uk in a document format like ODF or Microsoft Word. If you are unable to submit via email you can post your response to National Data Strategy team, Room 4.52, 100 Parliament Street, Westminster, London, SW1A 2BQ.

If you have any issues submitting evidence in the above formats please contact us at nationaldatastrategy@culture.gov.uk

We would like the evidence by 14 July 2019. We will publish a summary of relevant evidence as part of a formal National Data Strategy consultation later in 2019.

In your response, please clarify:

● if you are responding on behalf of an organisation or in a personal capacity

● which questions you are answering. There is no need to respond to all of the questions if they are not all relevant to you

● whether you are willing to be contacted (in which case, please provide contact details) and

● whether you want your response to remain confidential for commercial or other reasons. If you prefer to engage in person please specify this. We will try our best, resource-allowing, to find opportunities to do this.

3. Questions

To inform the National Data Strategy and to help structure this call for evidence, this document includes a provisional set of objectives divided into 3 areas of focus:

● People

● Economy and

● Government

Under each objective we have set out a number of questions to guide our research as it develops. These questions aim to stimulate thinking about both opportunities and issues and are not intended to be exhaustive. Please don't feel restricted by them in providing evidence that may be relevant to the National Data Strategy.

It will be particularly helpful to be made aware of evidence related to data that also consider:

● fairness and ethics

● how far the current rules governing data use are understood and/or fit for purpose

● inclusivity and/or

● carbon neutrality

People
1. To ensure that data is used in a way that people can trust.

2. To ensure that everyone can effectively participate in an increasingly data-driven society.

Economy

3. To ensure that all businesses and non-profit organisations can effectively operate in an increasingly data-driven economy.

4. To improve growth and productivity through the effective use of data across the economy.

Government

5. To improve public services and government operations through the effective collection, sharing and use of data.

6. To achieve alignment in government around data, with data shared and used cooperatively wherever appropriate.

Note: the term 'data' is intended to be understood broadly and refers to all kinds of data unless otherwise specified - for example, covering both personal and non-personal data, information that is stored both digitally and non-digitally, and data used for various purposes, e.g. data about people, data about performance, government data, content data and so on.

People

Objective 1. To ensure that data is used in a way that people can trust

Research area: opportunities and barriers to trust

1.1. How can organisations (private, public or third sector) demonstrate trustworthiness in their use of data?

1.2. How easy is it for the public to find about how information provided to or inferred about them by an organisation is being used?

1.3. Are organisations (private, public or third sector) using personal data in ways that may damage trust?

1.4. In what ways are companies making money from personal data? How profitable are these activities?

Research area: concerns around trustworthiness

1.5. Do people know how information provided to, or inferred about them by, an organisation (private, public or third sector) is being used, stored and shared?

1.6. To what extent are people concerned about how data about them is used, stored and shared? Are some groups more concerned than others? Are there particular categories of data that raise more concerns than others?

1.7. What commercial practices or behaviours have affected trust in the use of personal data? Have targeted advertising and 'recommending' affected trust?

1.8. Have the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 made people more concerned about how personal data is managed? How has it influenced their behaviour?

1.9. How far do existing protections, such as in the Data Protection Act, go in promoting transparency and trust? What, if anything, should the government do to further build trust?

International comparisons

1.10. Are there robust international comparison measures of trustworthiness in how data about individuals is used? Which are the most effective?

Objective 2. To ensure that everyone can effectively participate in an increasingly data-driven society

Research area: managing personal data

2.1. Are people aware of how to manage personal data about them? Do they know about tools to control access?

Research area: inclusivity

2.2. How does effective participation and data use differ by location and demographic group across the UK? What does this look like in urban areas, rural areas and more remote parts of the country?

2.3. How does effective participation and data use differ by sector?

2.4. What barriers to participation do different groups face? How are marginalised and vulnerable groups affected?

2.5. What can government do to support those in marginalised and vulnerable groups? What elements of our digital society would most benefit these groups?

Research area: data skills and employment

2.6. How important are basic data skills for employment in today's economy? What is the basic level of data skills needed and what kinds of skills are needed?

2.7. In which professions are data skills most important?

2.8. Are the relevant skills available and supported where they're needed?

2.9. Is industry able to provide the relevant skills or is further skilling needed through the education system?

Economy

Objective 3. To ensure that all businesses and non-profit organisations can effectively operate in an increasingly data-driven economy

Research area: competition

3.1. Are there specific challenges that small and medium businesses or non-profit organisations face? How do these vary among different types of organisations?

3.2. How and to what extent are small and medium businesses dependent on big businesses' data and data infrastructure?

3.3. Are there interventions that government should be making to remove barriers to participation for businesses and non-profit organisations? What kinds of interventions should be made? Do these differ by sector?

Research area: technological developments

3.4. How and to what extent are small and medium businesses and non-profit organisations contributing to innovation in the data space?

3.5. Are small and medium businesses and non-profit organisations sufficiently benefiting from new emerging technologies such as AI and the Internet of Things (IoT)?

3.6. How do businesses envisage that future technological developments will change how they use data?

Objective 4. To improve growth and productivity through the effective use of data across the economy

Research area: productivity

4.1. How is the effective use of data driving business productivity through

increased efficiency?

4.2. What are the barriers to the potential productivity gains from more effective data use?

4.3. Are there best practices in particular sectors that others can learn from?

4.4. How do firms develop expertise in their use of data?

Research area: societal and environmental benefits of better data use

4.5. In what ways would better use of data provide environmental benefits around key issues such as climate change and biosecurity?

4.6. In what ways would better use of data provide social and health benefits around key issues such as care of our ageing population and wellbeing?

Research area: broadening data access

4.7. What kinds of data should businesses and non-profit organisations make openly available? And why?

4.8. Should government encourage businesses and non-profit organisations to make more of the data they hold open? If so, how?

4.9. Where appropriate, how might government encourage businesses and non-profit organisations to share more data they hold, where it cannot be made open?

Research area: growth and efficiency underpinned by public sector data

4.10. What is the best approach to valuing public sector data in order to reflect its potential to stimulate private sector growth and to offer wider public benefits (financial or non-financial)?

4.11. How can the public sector quantify, evaluate and weight these benefits in order to determine the terms on which the data could be made available?

International comparisons

4.12. Are there robust international comparison measures of how data is driving economic growth, productivity, and innovation? Which are the most effective?

Government

Objective 5. To improve public services and government operations through the effective

collection, sharing and use of data

Research area: current use of data

5.1. How effectively are government and the wider public sector collecting, sharing, analysing and storing the data it holds? What does good practice look like? What does bad practice look like?

5.2. What are the main barriers to more effective data use within government? Are there barriers in cases where government works with the private sector?

5.3. Are there areas within data management, use and access where there is a skills gap in government? What additional data skills are needed in government?

5.4. How effectively are local authorities using the data they hold? What challenges do they face?

5.5. How effectively are wider public sector organisations using the data they hold? What challenges do they face?

Research area: improving data use

5.6. What can government and the wider public sector do to improve its collection, sharing, analysis and storage of data?

5.7. How can the government create incentives for these improvements?

5.8. What best practice examples of data use in government can we learn from?

5.9. What private sector practices in data management and governance can the public sector learn from?

5.10. What are the main opportunities for improving outward facing public services through effective data use?

Objective 6. To achieve alignment in government around data, with data shared and used cooperatively wherever appropriate

Research area: barriers to data sharing within government

6.1. When should public authorities open up access to data they hold with other departments? When should they not?

6.2. When do people find that government has improved services through better use of data? In which areas would people most like to see data better used?

6.3. What issues are there around government increasing access to the data it

holds between departments and other parts of the public sector? Does the use of Privacy Enhancing Technologies sufficiently counter any such risks?

6.4. What kinds of problems do barriers to data sharing create for government departments and public sector organisations?

6.5. What kinds of problems do barriers to data sharing create outside of government?

6.6. Part 5 of the Digital Economy Act is designed to improve the use of publicly held information for specific purposes. How are organisations making use of the relevant powers, appropriately and effectively?

International comparisons

6.7. Are there robust international comparison measure and case studies of governments' effective use of data within government and to deliver public services?

4. Further information

Information provided in response to this call for evidence, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential.

If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding.

We'll process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

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