

## Perspective: The Global Opportunities of the Age of Data

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Sixty years ago, the first transatlantic cable was laid across the Atlantic Ocean, heralding a new era in communications between the U.S. and the European continent. Today, billions of bits of data are transferred between continents every minute, fostering the growth of global commerce and a worldwide economy.

This transfer of data is essential to continued innovation that impacts every American or European business in some way, and it's essential to building programs and delivering results for our clients. When you focus in from the broad view, you see that behind many of these bits of a data is a person.

This connection to the individual is what drives Alliance Data's cultural imperative to respect and protect data. Our businesses use data to market products and present offers to individuals who have indicated an interest in a product or category. Increasingly, this requires us to transfer data across borders.

In the U.S. alone, the data-driven marketing economy added \$156 billion in revenue to the economy and fueled more than 675,000 jobs in 2012. And sharing data is essential to the marketing industries, with \$110 billion associated with the ability to exchange data. These figures only reflect the data sharing and free flow of only the marketing industry in one country. Globally, the value of free flowing data is immense, bringing value to not only those countries that allow data to leave the original jurisdiction, but also those countries receiving the data.

The U.S. generally operates under an "opt-out" framework. Responsible marketers collect, analyze and use information for marketing purposes, providing transparency and choice to consumers if they prefer to opt-out of the process. The EU, on the other hand, generally operates under an "opt-in" framework. Consumers there must opt-in to allow the collection, analysis and use of information. To facilitate the transfer of information across borders, the two areas are operating under the U.S.-EU Safe Harbor Framework, a self-certification process that ensures companies are meeting privacy standards.

As the role and amount of data continues to grow as a driver of the economy, both the European Union and the United States government continue to take a closer look at how data is used and protected. Our view at Alliance Data and Epsilon has been consistent: the free flow of data is essential to a healthy economy, provided companies operate within an ethical and responsible framework. For our part, this ethical responsibility is a foundation of our company, and we will always operate with the best interests of our clients while providing consumers with a choice.

Keeping the free flow of data moving across borders helps to ensure companies around the globe are able to increase productivity and continue global economic growth.

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