Data 2025

Data plays a pivotal role in many avenues of our lives, our economies, and our societies. But what is data? This question is critical yet not easy to answer since data is not just one thing, and it is changing fast as we look to the future.

Economically, data is a factor of production that is as critical to competitiveness in the 21st century as capital and labour were in the 20th century. Scientifically, data is changing the way research is conducted in fields like medicine, chemistry, and others. Internationally, data is transforming areas ranging from international trade and finance to development assistance and the control of epidemics. Data is changing the nature of military and geostrategic conflicts, raising new issues of cybersecurity, impacting the approach to public health, and helping in the fight against climate change.

The rising importance of data has thrown up new challenges ranging from competition policy to privacy to the geostrategic implications of 5G. The importance of understanding and addressing these new challenges has been made more urgent by a growing, popular backlash against some aspects of the digital economy. This 'techlash' is perhaps inevitable as every great new tool can be used for both good and bad. Health data can yield new insights for better fitness and to cure disease, but it can also allow an insurance company or employer to discriminate. Data on political preferences helps new candidates compete for public office, but it can also help deliver disinformation. And data can help refugees resettle but can also help regimes retaliate. And there is an increasing sense that only the tip of the iceberg is in view.

Data governance, to realise the benefits of data and reduce the harms, cannot be left only to governments. Users must have a say, with the help of civil society; new technology can provide privacy and security by design; companies can help to generate trust through ethical data handling; while governments take their respective role in setting policy and developing regulations.

The goal of this conference is to boost understanding of what data is and help to develop mindsets and attitudes that are based on technical and economic realities rather than the myths and shallow discussions that so often appear in popular media. It will start with the present, but look forward to the opportunities, and the challenges, that new technologies will bring for the year 2025.

This event is held in the context of the Road to Bern, a series of events in Geneva leading to the United Nations World Data Forum, 18-21 October 2020 in Bern.

Programme

COFFEE AND REGISTRATION	08:00 ONWARDS

Opening Session
 	
Welcome
 	
● Introduction
    ● **Philippe Burrin,** Director, Graduate Institute, Geneva
    ● **Richard Baldwin,** Professor of International Economics, Graduate Institute, Geneva
● Keynote speaker
    ● **Martin Vetterli,** President, EPFL
 	
Moderator: **Michael Kende,** Visiting Professor, Graduate Institute, Geneva
	09:00 – 09:30

Session 1. What is data? This panel will examine the question of what is data? In particular, how is personal data defined? What are the contexts in which such data can be used and misused? What is big data, how is it gathered, and how is it different? What is the role of data in machine learning and artificial intelligence? *Speakers* ● *Internet governance:* **Jovan Kurbalija**, Founding Director of DiploFoundation and the Head of the Geneva Internet Platform ● *Big data:* **Kenneth Cukier*,** Senior Editor at *The Economist* and fellow at Oxford University Said Business School ● *Machine learning:* **Matthias Grossglauser,** Associate Professor in the School of Computer and Communication Science, EPFL	09:30 – 10:30
COFFEE BREAK	10:30 – 11:00

* Invited

Session 2. How will data be used? Modern IT enables massive usage of data in a growing number of application areas. We will consider here three concrete examples of such areas that are going to be profoundly affected by Big Data in the coming years. We will also address the related data protection concerns. *Topics and speakers*: • *Data in humanitarian action,* **Massimo Marelli***,* Head of Data Protection Office, International Committee of the Red Cross • *Data in epidemiology,* **Marcel Salathé***,* Associate Professor, EPFL • *Data protection in personalized health,* **Jean-Pierre Hubaux***,* Professor, Laboratory of data Security, EPFL	11:00 – 12:30
LUNCH AND NETWORKING	12:30 – 13:30
Session 3. Principles of Data Governance The principles of data governance must be developed and implemented with a multi-stakeholder approach. Civil society has a role to develop a framework of good practices; government can implement such a framework through new regulations; and vendors have a role in helping to develop trust through their technologies and practices. *Topics and speakers*: (to be invited) • *Ethical data handling.* **Robin Wilton**, Senior Advisor for Internet Trust, Internet Society • *Government.* **Anna Buchta**, Head of Unit "Policy & Consultation", European Data Protection Supervisor • *Developing corporate trust*. **Jean-Yves Art,** Senior Director, Strategic Partnerships, Microsoft	13:30 – 15:00
COFFEE BREAK	15:00 – 15:30

* Invited

Session 4. Future Practice of Data Governance In practice, it has been difficult to apply the principles of data governance. This can be because the current technology presents challenges, with new technologies being designed to make it easier to govern data use. It can also be because, regardless of the technology, there is a market failure, for instance the corporate liability from poor data governance is not sufficient. It can also be from a variety of other factors that companies face in their data governance. *Topics and speakers*: ● *Data in insurance:* **Jeff Bohn**, Director, Swiss Re Institute ● *Security technology:* **Olivier Crochat**, Executive Director, Centre for Digital Trust, EPFL ● *Data in finance:* **Marie Nemond,** Group Chief Data Officer, Pictet Asset Management SA *Moderator*: **Rüdiger Fahlenbrach,** Professor of Finance, Swiss Finance Institute and EPFL	15:30 – 17:00
Closing Session *Closing keynote:* ● **Roberto Azevedo,** Director-General, World Trade Organization *Forward-looking Panel:* ● **Jean-Yves Art,** Senior Director, Strategic Partnerships, Microsoft ● **Edouard Bugnion***, Vice President for Information Systems, EPFL *Moderator*: **Richard Baldwin,** The Graduate Institute, Geneva	17:00 – 18:00
NETWORKING RECEPTION	18:00 – 19:00

* Invited