

[Data \(https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/data\)](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/data)

Data is everywhere and growing at an unprecedented pace. The Commission has developed a European data strategy to help us unlock its benefits.



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Data is an essential building block of modern societies, and we are constantly producing more of it: citizens create data while browsing the internet, booking travel, or buying clothes online, and public bodies generate data from weather tracking and traffic monitoring. So, you might not be surprised to hear that the quantity of data that exists is expected to multiply by five between 2018 and 2025.

In the digital age, we are able to process these vast quantities of data faster than we ever imagined and put it to an almost endless variety of uses. Used correctly, data can bring benefits to citizens such as personalised medicines, cheaper public services, safer and cleaner public transport, and much more.

Data is a driver of innovation for industries and SMEs to develop new products and services. Data also contributes to the European Green Deal: it helps to protect our planet by optimising our energy efficiency and reducing our carbon footprint. By collecting information on the environment, data can help us fight climate emergencies, such as floods and wildfires. And, by monitoring the energy consumption of buildings and cars, data can help us reduce our carbon production.

To leverage this potential, data needs to be shared in a trusted way respecting EU rules and values. For example, in the area of data protection, and respect of intellectual property and trade secrets. That is why we are creating a new model with clear rules: a European single market for data,

which is open, yet sovereign. This will be a powerful engine for innovation and new jobs.

2020 was a crucial year for data. The [European data strategy](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/strategy-data) (https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/strategy-data) presented in February 2020 introduces measures to ensure we experience the full potential of what data can offer. It will introduce protections for data, ensuring it is stored in a secure and trusted way. And, it sets up the goals and rules to exploit data in a clear and trusted way for the benefits of citizens, businesses, researchers and public administrations.

Key elements of the European data strategy include:

- allowing data to [flow freely within the EU](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/non-personal-data) (https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/non-personal-data) and across sectors;
- overcoming barriers to sharing, through technical infrastructure, legal rules and ethical guidelines;
- fostering the development of collections of sector-specific data;
- ensuring EU autonomy in supplying [European cloud services](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/cloud-computing) (https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/cloud-computing).

To achieve these goals, the Commission proposed a Data Governance Act, in November 2020. The Data Governance Act aims to facilitate data sharing across the EU and between sectors to create growth, increase control and trust of both citizens and companies regarding their data, and offer an alternative European model to the data handling practice of major tech platforms. This milestone in data policy will also support European data spaces where data sharing will be boosted in several domains ranging from energy to mobility, from health to the European Green Deal.

More milestones are to come during the Digital Decade. The [proposed Data Act](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/data-act) (https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/data-act) will help creating a fair data economy, in which European companies and citizens have more control over their data, and governments can make better use of big data held by the private sector for the benefit of society. In addition, new rules on high-value datasets under the [Open Data Directive](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1561563110433&uri=CELEX%3A32019L1024) (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1561563110433&uri=CELEX%3A32019L1024) will ensure access to certain datasets across the EU for free, for example meteorological and mobility data.

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The European Commission aims to provide European businesses and public authorities with access to secure, sustainable and interoperable cloud infrastructures and services.

[A European Strategy for data \(https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/strategy-data\)](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/strategy-data)

The strategy for data focuses on putting people first in developing technology, and defending and promoting European values and rights in the digital world.

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