



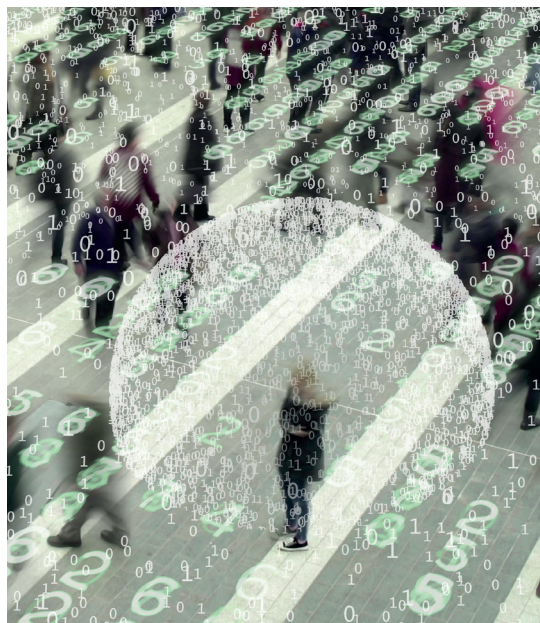
# 1.0 Delivering Value Through Data

Throughout 2018, Future Agenda canvassed the views of a wide range of 900 experts with different backgrounds and perspectives from around the world, to provide their insights on the future value of data. Supported by Facebook and many other organisations, we held 30 workshops across 24 countries in Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Europe. In them, we reviewed the data landscape across the globe, as it is now, and how experts think it will evolve over the next five to ten years.

The aim? To gain a better understanding of how perspectives and priorities differ across the world, and to use the diverse voices and viewpoints to help governments, organisations, and individuals to better understand what they need to do to realise data's full potential.

To achieve this, we did three things. First, in each locality we brought together as wide a variety of people of different perspectives and disciplines as possible: Policy makers, corporate professionals, start-ups, NGOs, students, think tanks. Second, we asked participants to identify and prioritise the themes they considered to be most important in terms of opportunity and concern. Third, we asked them to debate in depth the highest priority issues, to identify areas of agreement and disagreement, and map out possible paths forward.

We are not aware of any other exercise of this scale or scope. No other project we know of has carefully and methodically canvassed the views of such a wide range of experts from such a diverse range of backgrounds and geographical locations. The result, we hope, delivers a more comprehensive picture of the sheer variety of issues and views thrown up by a fast-evolving 'data economy' than can be found elsewhere. And, by providing this rich set of perspectives, we aim to help businesses and governments - to develop the policies, strategies, and innovations that realise the full potential of data (personal, social, economic, commercial), while addressing potential harms, both locally and globally.



Our findings provide insights into:

- How priorities differ across geographical locations
- Areas where the actual perception and understanding of key issues differ (for example, over what the risks and opportunities are)
- Areas of broad consensus
- Areas of disagreement as to what issues should be prioritised and how to deal with them

# 1.1 Key Findings

The broad open-ended nature of this study provided participants with the opportunity to drive their own agenda. In each location around the world, workshop participants could prioritise the issues they felt to be most important. The resulting discussions covered a wide range of subjects from ownership of machine data, through to the potential of Open Data, to and whether or not ‘informed consent’ is a workable way to ensure fair and, equitable uses of personal data.

Wherever we were in the world, however, six overarching themes informed virtually every discussion. They were:

**1. Data about Me:** One of the most valuable but contentious forms of data is data from and about individuals. How to deal with issues related to personal data generated a wide range discussions and dilemmas, including (for example) debates about privacy, the efficacy of mechanisms such as ‘informed consent’, who should have control over this data, the extent to which individuals are getting a ‘fair share’ of its benefits, and the degree to which they are able to participate in the new data economy. With the exception for of the need for ‘privacy’, where there were some strong differences in opinion, there was widespread agreement that these issues are important. Pressure for solutions that ‘empower’ individuals further is strong, but is there a broadly acceptable solution, and what does it look like?

**2. ‘Ownership’ and Value:** In discussion after discussion, we found that ‘ownership’ and rights to the value extracted from data are inextricably linked in peoples’ minds. The assumption is that if we can agree on the ‘ownership’ of data, then we can sort out who is entitled to what “fair share” of value. But the more these discussions progressed, the less helpful traditional notions of ‘ownership’ seemed to be. If exclusive ‘ownership’ is a questionable

concept in the context of data, what is the alternative? Many alternative ways of thinking about this (discussed later in this report) were proposed: the debate is only just beginning.

**3. Power and Influence:** Data is becoming a means of exercising power, as well as a focus for the multiple struggles for power. This power can come in many forms. It could be the power to make decisions that affect peoples’ lives by, for example, giving or withholding their access to services. Some organisations’ use of data gives them the power to act as ‘choice architects’, deciding what information is to be presented to people and how. Concentrations of data can create concentrations of economic power, which in turn could affect the distribution of available benefits. Is there are ‘right’ or ‘best’ balance or sharing of power between different parties and stakeholders. If so, what does it look like?

**4. Global, Regional, and Local:** Many workshop participants took it for granted that the reach and influence of global ‘Big Tech’ firms will simply continue to grow. But there is powerful sentiment, especially in fast-growing regions such as Africa and India, that governments should assert more control over data to protect citizens’ rights, develop local economies, and maintain a sense of cultural identity. Some saw this as a necessary reaction to ongoing ‘data imperialism’, particularly by US- based west coast technology companies. Interestingly, participants in several Western workshops were quick to dismiss these concerns, which suggests mutual misunderstanding between key parties in different regions could intensify.



**5.Trust and Trustworthiness:** In workshops around the world, there was a widespread sense that very few organisations, if any, can be trusted with data, without any checks and balances. Indeed, apart from some nations where trust in government remains high, there was a common feeling that levels of trust in all established institutions, both government and business, are in decline - just when, arguably, increasing levels of trust are needed. This suggests that there will be increasing pressure for organisations to demonstrate trustworthiness. What do they have to do to achieve this? And policy makers and regulators will come under equally intense pressure to answer the question, 'on what basis can/should organisations be trusted with data?'

**6.Shared Understanding:** From Abidjan to Bogota, Bengaluru to Stockholm, workshop participants were keenly aware that societies are still struggling to understand what the key issues are, and what to do about them. While 'everyone knows' that data can be extremely valuable, people are much less clear on where this value comes from, or what forms it can or will take. Issues such as data ethics, the potential impact of AI and of machine generated data often seemed dauntingly complicated and difficult to understand. Despite this, there is a huge appetite to find universal approaches in dealing with these complexities. Many agreed that the first step is to establish a common language about data that can help provide clarity about of terms, issues, and implications, in order to point a way forward.

## 1.2 Consensus and Disagreement

One key message emerges from debates that were held about these issues: the debate around data globally has multiple potential fault lines, each one of which needs to be addressed if significant progress is to be made. People have different understandings and perceptions as to what is actually happening: they disagree about 'the facts'. They have different and often (at least apparently) conflicting vested interests. Governments, large global corporations, small local businesses, individuals as citizens and consumers, all want different things. And people are bringing different norms and values to the debate - widely diverging but strongly held beliefs about 'what is right' and 'what is fair'. For example, in Asia in particular, there were multiple conversations around the conflict between eastern and Western philosophies, and how their different approaches will influence, for example, the development of AI and machine learning driven by the data.

This project is all about opening up a better-informed dialogue about the dialogue around the culture and context of data - and about the need for those in power to listen to voices which they may not be hearing. It's almost impossible to make wise, informed decisions when we don't fully understand the landscape we are operating within.

Within these broad cross-cutting themes, the issues which inspired the largest number of conversations were:

- The need for greater digital literacy amongst consumers, citizens, employees, policy makers, and regulators;
- The potential to value data as a commercial/ economic asset and the implications this may have for how data-based businesses are valued and taxed;

- How to establish a durable regulatory environment that effectively remedies harms and protects users without stifling future innovation;
- The failure of 'informed consent' to give individuals control over the use of their personal data.;

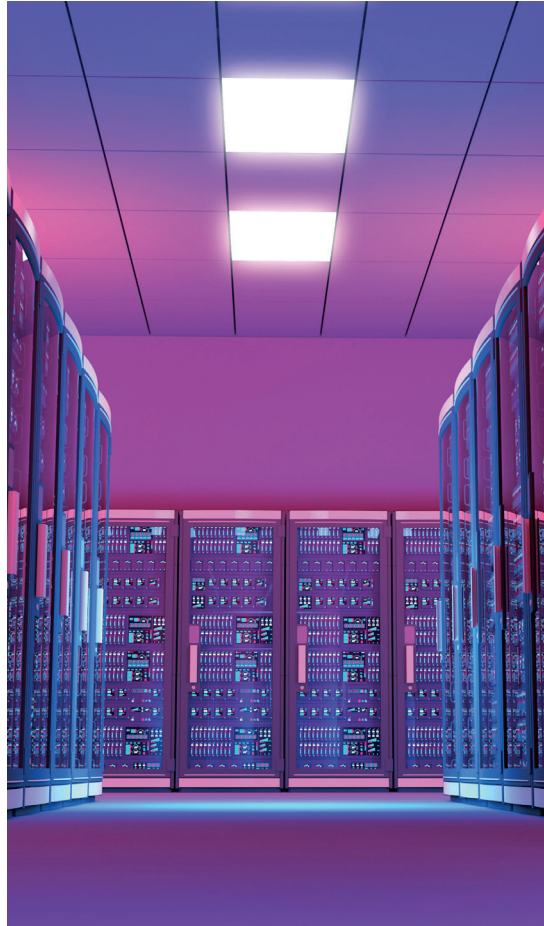
Within these discussions, there were areas of global consensus. They included:

- Concern around a lack of transparency about how data is collected, classified, interpreted, and used. This is undermining trust in business and hampering policy makers' ability to develop robust checks and balances;
- The need for organisations to become more accountable for the ways personal data is used and shared;
- The need to create a common language for data and the issues related to its use;
- The as yet untapped value of sharing data sets that would particularly benefit society. Potential benefits include improved health, transport, and security services. But greater data sharing could also benefit economic growth more broadly.



In contrast, there were also areas of clear disagreement. These include debates around:

- Open data (particularly open public data): Some believe open data offers the best chance of unlocking the potential of big data to solve societal challenges and bring collective benefit. However, others described the exact same efforts as increasing imbalances of power and reward by handing society's most valuable data assets to those most able to exploit them, whether for the public good or not;
- Data 'ownership': While everyone agreed on the need for clearer rules as to who gets what value from data, there was little agreement on what these rules should be, how they should be arrived at, or enforced;
- Personal data privacy and national security: For some, a regulated erosion of privacy is a necessary and reasonable price to pay for heightened national security; for others, even small erosions of privacy set us on the slippery slope towards a kind of society that is to be feared far more than any piecemeal threats to national security;
- Data sovereignty: Many workshop participants, particularly in emerging economies, were strongly in favour of efforts to promote data sovereignty as a necessary measure to address concerns over privacy, consumer rights, domestic law enforcement and cyber security, and national economic growth. But for others, this is considered to be little more than an effort to close digital markets — with the ultimate impact of reducing the efficiency of global services increasing costs for small businesses, and dampening innovation.



## 1.3 Our Approach

The programme described above followed Future Agenda's Open Foresight model to gather and develop emerging views on a broad theme, to offer new perspectives on the opportunities and challenges facing governments, business, and society. Broadly speaking, this consists of three steps

- 1) An initial perspective provocation
- 2) Facilitated workshops
- 3) Synthesis of emerging views

The initial perspective on the Value of Data was written by Future Agenda's Director of Global Insight, Dr Robin Pharaoh. In it, he points out the scale of change that we are experiencing around the collection of data:

"It is the movement of data collection and analysis, experiment, and discovery from remote and singular processes, to the most intimate and fundamental parts of everyone's personal, social, and economic lives, seemingly without limit and without end, that has driven the idea of data into the heart of contemporary social and political discourse."

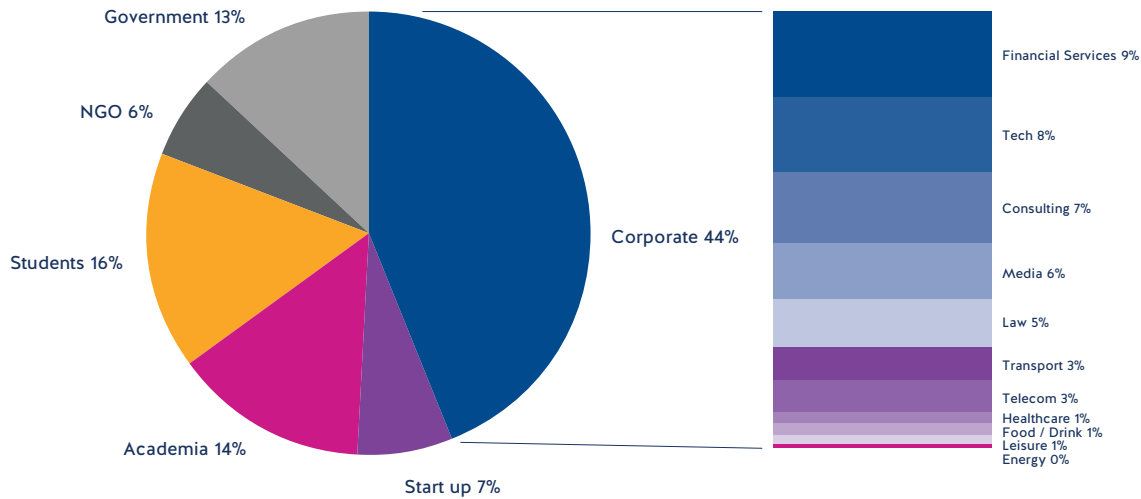
He then argues that "the value of data lies in the uses to which it is put," and goes on to frame questions around what types of data drive the most positive value in what contexts. As the perspective is designed to stimulate debate, he ends with specific questions. These include:

- Who benefits from the value derived from data?
- Who is best placed to use data to drive positive social value?
- What are the trade-offs and downsides of mass data collection, storage, and use, and critically, who is monitoring or accountable for these?

These questions, alongside the insights from the previous programmes, were then used as the point of departure for the subsequent expert workshops which took place across the world.

### Workshop format

Workshops were then held in 30 different locations in 24 countries around the world. In all, just over 900 experts from many different industries and sectors took part. Each workshop comprised between 25 – 35 people. In addition to our own network, we worked closely with our sponsors and partnered with think tanks, NGOs, and academics in order to identify participants from as diverse backgrounds and disciplines as possible. As a result, we were able to talk to experts from academia, the technology sector – both start-ups and established players - entrepreneurs, foundations, the voluntary sector, government officials, industry body representatives, corporates, private industry, professional networks, and social media experts.



### Future Value of Data - Participants Background

Each event was run under the Chatham House Rule, thus allowing free discourse, so that assumptions could be challenged, new perspectives shared, and insightful and pragmatic views on how change is most likely to occur, actively debated.<sup>1</sup>

All the workshops followed the same process. Starting with insights drawn from the initial perspective and previous discussions, they focussed on identifying the key issues, adding additional views and insights, and highlighting pivotal areas for future innovation and change, globally and locally. The new insights and ideas generated were carried through into follow on sessions to ensure iteration and scrutiny.

Each event also followed the same basic format:

- Group feedback on the insights gained from the initial perspective and from the previous discussions;
- Table debate to agree the relevance of each insight for their market or sector, and prioritise them as areas of high, medium, or low significance, according to their particular perspective;
- Plenary discussion so that all the groups can compare their point of view with others;
- Table discussion to uncover areas or issues which might not yet have been addressed and should be included;
- Participants were invited to vote individually on the insights that they thought would have the most impact in their country or region;
- New groups were consequently formed so that they could explore the most highly rated topics in more detail. This included discussion on the drivers of change, and probably pathways for the future;
- These were then shared and challenged in a plenary session at the close of the workshop.



In this way, experts in each locality were both voting on which issues they see as the most important, and then detailing the future impacts and implications – locally and globally. At the end of each event, a detailed write up was shared with all participants, who were asked to check it for accuracy. If necessary, modifications were then made, and the final write up was shared with all those who had contributed to the other discussions that had taken place around the world.

An interim paper was published in August 2018, which provided an overview of the views from the first 18 workshops.<sup>2</sup> A further 12 workshops were then held between September and December. By the end of the programme, 70 unique insights had been gathered. These were then synthesised into 14 clusters and shared as a presentation in December 2018. Further academic and industry expert feedback and iteration during much of 2019, has added more context and refined the issues which are now integrated into the foresights summarised in this report.



## 1.4 Our Hosts

The initial sponsor for this programme was the Privacy and Data Policy team at Facebook, who funded just over half the workshops in total and have been involved in the writing of this report. We would also like to thank Unities Ltd. for their support, commentary and expert research during its development.

As with all Future Agenda programmes, we were keen to engage others in the discussions, and therefore we reached out to a wide range of organisations, including other corporates, academics, NGOs, government bodies, and think tanks, to ask for their support. Sometimes this was financial, sometimes it was operational – for example, by providing space for a room for a workshop and helping to identify participants. In total, thirty-four organisations became involved in developing the programme. As a result of their help,

we were able to run 30 workshops in 24 countries throughout 2018, and, in so doing, engaged with approximately 900 experts from around the world.

We would like to thank all those who contributed in whatever way for the time and effort they gave us. This report would not have been possible without their generous support.

Dr Tim Jones and Caroline Dewing  
November 2019

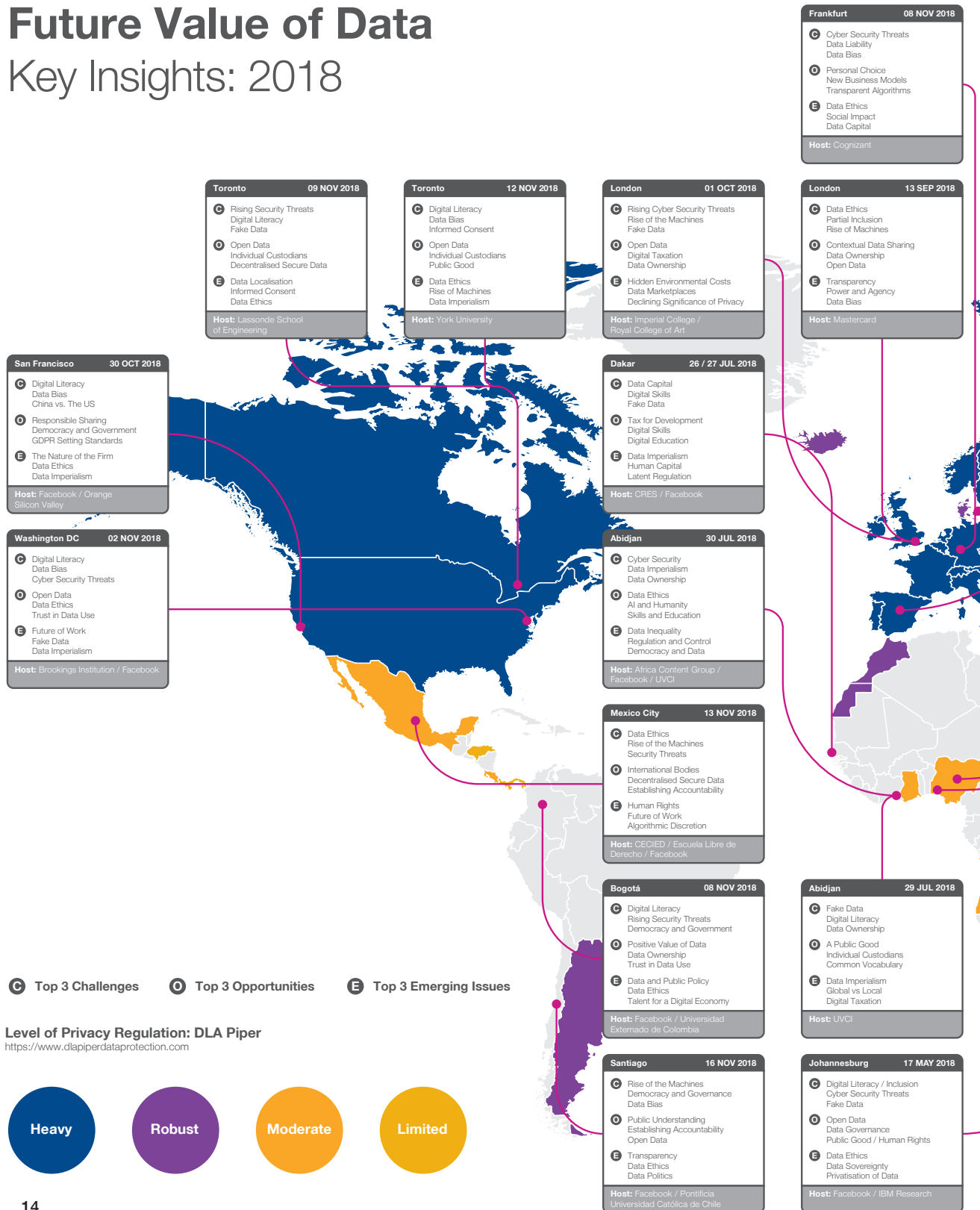


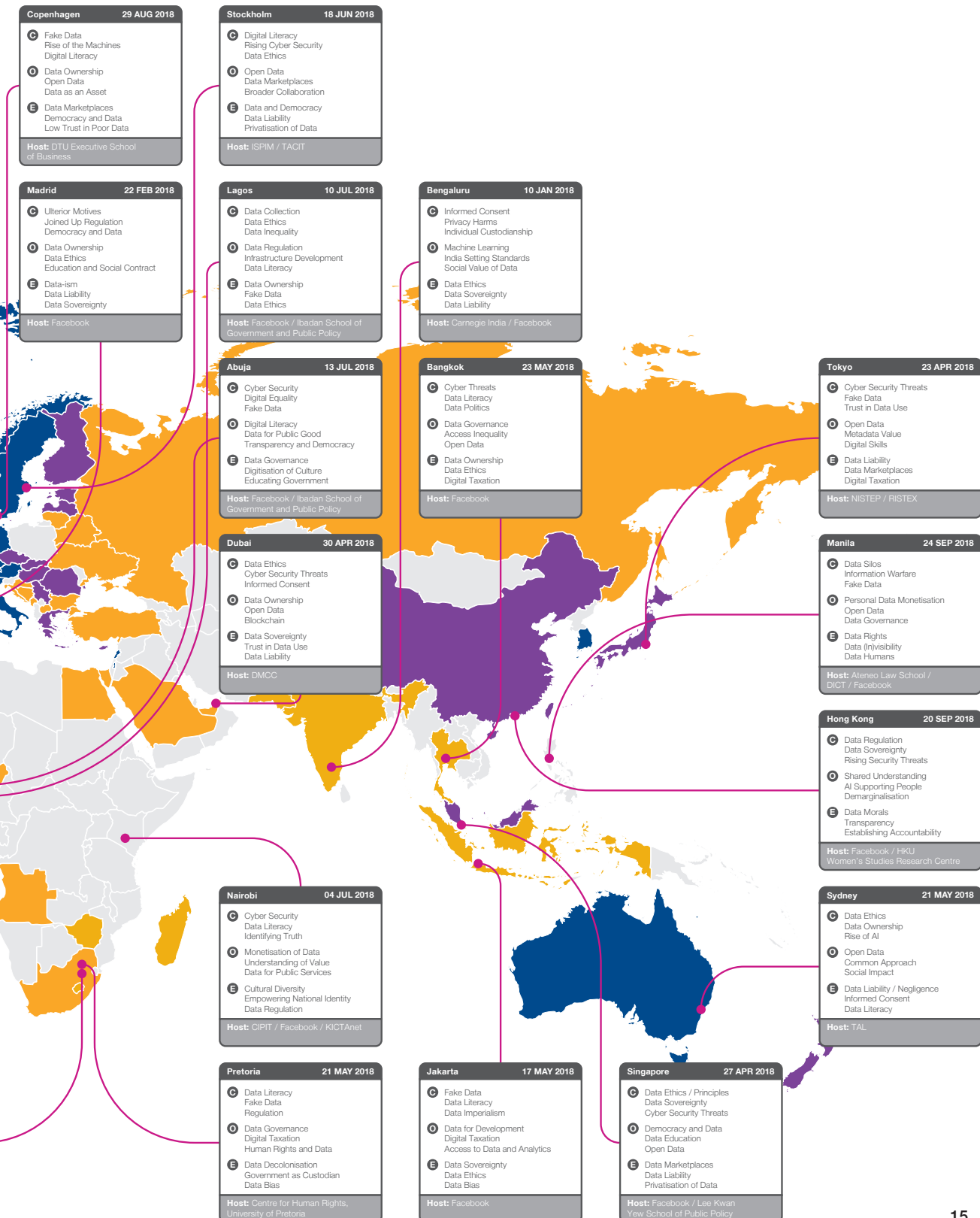
# Future Value of Data

## Key Insights: 2018

Delivering Value Through Data

Insights from Multiple Expert Discussions Around the World



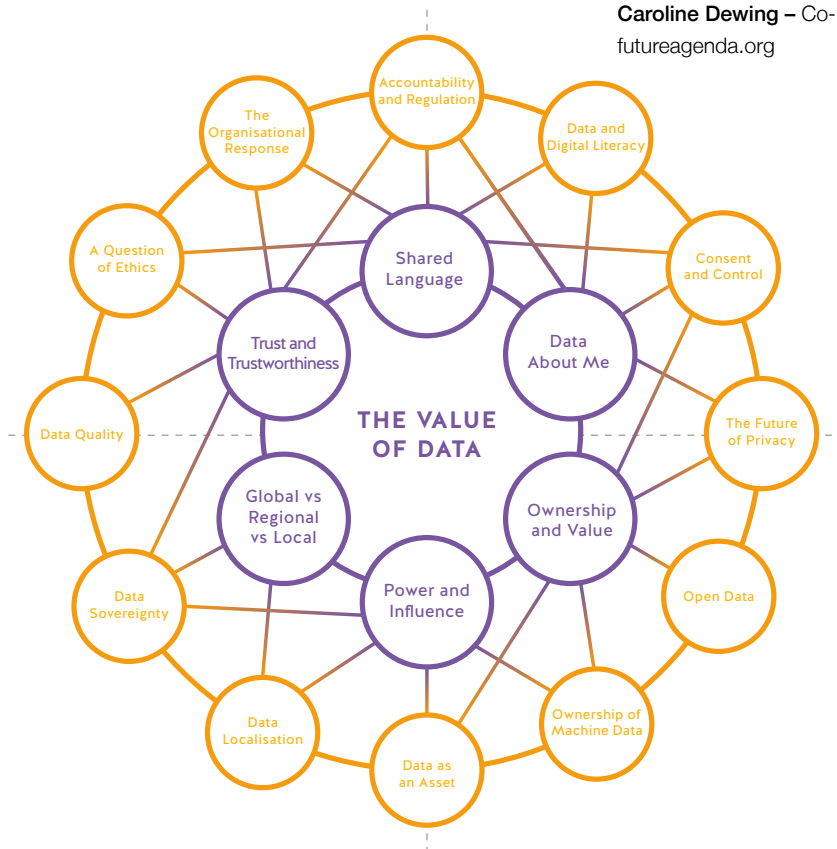


## Context

Throughout 2018, Future Agenda canvassed the views of a wide range of 900 experts with different backgrounds and perspectives from around the world, to provide their insights on the future value of data. Supported by Facebook and many other organisations, we held 30 workshops across 24 countries in Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Europe. In them, we reviewed the data landscape across the globe, as it is now, and how experts think it will evolve over the next five to ten years.

The aim of the project was to gain a better understanding of how perspectives and priorities differ across the world, and to use the diverse voices and viewpoints to help governments, organisations, and individuals to better understand what they need to do to realise data's full potential.

From the multiple discussions 6 over-arching themes were identified alongside 12 additional, related future shifts as summarised in the diagram below.



Details of each of these, a full report and additional supporting information can all be found on the dedicated mini-site: [www.deliveringvaluethroughdata.org](http://www.deliveringvaluethroughdata.org)

## About Future Agenda

Future Agenda is an open source think tank and advisory firm. It runs a global open foresight programme, helping organisations to identify emerging opportunities, and make more informed decisions. Future Agenda also supports leading organisations, large and small, on strategy, growth and innovation.

Founded in 2010, Future Agenda has pioneered an open foresight approach bringing together senior leaders across business, academia, NFP and government to challenge assumptions about the next ten years, build an informed view and establish robust growth strategies focused on major emerging opportunities. We connect the informed and influential to help drive lasting impact.

For more information please see:

**[www.futureagenda.org](http://www.futureagenda.org)**

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