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The Demolition of American Data Infrastructure

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Objectives

Efforts to shrink the U.S. Government have decimated the existing American data infrastructure. By tracking the impact of executive orders and administration policies on data integrity, supply, and demand, we show outcomes for state and local governments, non-profit and social sector organizations, and the private sector.

ciencies and harms. We outline plans to build on the current infrastructure to ensure reliable and responsible use of personal data.

Methods

Soon after the inauguration, government agencies had to remove data and findings about topics including diversity, equity and inclusion; sexual orientation and gender identity; and climate change. This involved dataset delisting and funding restrictions in affected programs. Data specialists began data rescue efforts to preserve copies of existing data sources. Additional data experts started data monitoring efforts to spot changes and deletions. At the same time, cuts to federal staffing and budgets were monitored to identify disruptions to linked and modeled data measures essential for the functioning of the economy and society.

Results

A dedicated community emerged in February 2025 including academic and private sector data users, archivists and librarians, and former data producers. They track what is gone, what is changing, how critical data series are affected (e.g., economic indicators and population estimates), and source alternative options. Others assess the data inputs for AI models, and propose protections to protect privacy and to reduce risks of AI perpetuating error or bias. Policy proposals on how to restore transparency involve physical and information technology security, as well as policies and protocols. These proposals aim to restore trust that data will be used appropriately and that questions to government officials will be answered.

Conclusion

The previous governance structures and norms about use of data are gone. The new normal must be monitored and questioned, specifically whether increased use of AI achieves effi-

