OPAL: Technology and Governance Standards to Leverage Private Data for Human Development

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OPAL tackles the Data Revolution’s #1 conundrum: sharing and using sensitive data safely, ethically, systematically, at scale

Open algorithms: A new paradigm for using private data for social good

By Thomas Roca, Emmanuel Letouzé | 18 July 2016

On the privacy-conscientious use of mobile phone data

Yves-Alexandre de Montjoye, Sébastien Gambs, Vincent Blondel, Geoffrey Canright, Nicolas de Cordes, Sébastien Deletaille, Kenth Engø-Monsen, Manuel Garcia-Herranz, Jake Kendall, Cameron Kerry, Gauter Kriks, Emmanuel Letouzé, Miguel Luengo-Oroz, Nuria Oliver, Luc Rocher, Alex Rutherford, Zbigniew Smoreda, Jessica Steele, Erik Wetter, Alex “Sandy” Pentland & Linus Bengtsson

*Scientific Data* 5, Article number: 180286 (2018) | Download Citation

Can tracking people through phone-call data improve lives?
Crucially, the problem(s) OPAL address(es) is not only data gaps, it is also making measurement, stats and facts *matter* more

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**Data and Development: It’s complicated**

![Data and Development: It’s complicated](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cros/content/emmanuel-lefouzé-presentation-make-measurement-matter_en)

**TOWARDS A HUMAN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

Emmanuel Letouzé¹, Alex Pentland²

¹Data-Pop Alliance, MIT Media Lab, and OPAL, ²MIT and Data-Pop Alliance, and OPAL
OPAL is developing and testing ‘Human AI’ privacy-preserving and participatory technology and governance standards.
After Senegal and Colombia with their NSOs and 2 major telcos, OPAL aims to expand to new users, industries and geographies.

“Other data sharing initiatives with private companies are also being worked on, including OPAL (...), to derive aggregated insights from a company’s data without data leaving the company’s server. If proven successful, this could be a powerful tool in unlocking private data for social causes.”

—McKinsey Global Institute “Applying AI for Social Good”, December 2018
Key message: We must “industrialize” the Data revolution

Can tracking people through phone-call data improve lives?
Researchers have analysed anonymized phone records of tens of millions of people in low-income countries. Critics question whether the benefits outweigh the risks.

DATA FOR DEVELOPMENT
In 2012, the mobile-phone company Orange, together with data scientists at the UN and several universities, held a ‘Data for Development’ challenge to encourage researchers to explore positive uses for call-detail records. Phone companies mostly analyse the records to boost their businesses, says Robert Kirkpatrick, director of UN Global Pulse, an initiative to harness big data. “We wanted to show how it could be used for the public good,” he says.

Orange let scientists analyse anonymized call records from customers in Côte d’Ivoire. In one project, researchers found that brief calls surged before small violent events in Côte d’Ivoire, and suggested that future analyses could help officials to predict danger and thus intervene — but that idea hasn’t been taken up.

erlands, defends the project’s worth. Anyone who might want to harm any of the 3.6 million Syrian refugees in Turkey already knows their neighbourhoods, he argues. But call-record intelligence might help policymakers by giving them quantitative information about refugee movements. And an ethics committee vetted the results: when research indicated refugees were working at a location illegally, for example, the committee told them not to publish the finding.

Responding to the charge that such data challenges have not helped people, Kirkpatrick says exploration was a necessary first step. The next phase in call-records research, he says, should be cost-benefit analyses that look at the investment needed to conduct a study, roll out an intervention and appraise the advantages for communities.

SECURITY AND CONSENT
In the meantime, exploratory studies continue.
Thank you
Merci
Gracias

www.datapopalliance.org
www.opalproject.org