



# Introduction

Adobe is keen to share its thoughts and insights into the Exposure Draft of the Data Availability and Transparency Bill. We are pleased that the Government's Draft Bill recognises that more can be done to harness the power of data to improve public services in Australia, and hope our submission is useful.

The Draft Bill aims to:

- promote better availability of public sector data
- enable consistent safeguards for sharing public sector data
- enhance integrity and transparency in sharing public sector data
- build confidence in the use of public sector data, and
- establish institutional arrangements for sharing public sector data.

Adobe welcomes the provisions in this Draft Bill to make better use of data in a public sector context. As a global leader in digital experiences and real-time data analytics to the private and public sectors, we see enormous potential for better use of data to help improve public service delivery by providing access to the right service and right information in a timely manner, manage cost, reduce fraud and better meet the expectations of citizens.

It is for Parliament and Government to construct the appropriate regulatory framework to ensure necessary safeguards are in place for the use of public data. However, the power of data and its benefit to individual citizens in their interaction with government, plus the overall benefit to public service delivery, means that we should address this issue to ensure that Australia has public services fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century – giving citizens the experience they want and expect when interacting with government, just like they do with commercial entities.

Adobe's submission is in three parts. The first is an outline of why we support the Bill and its intentions, and the great benefits to citizens and government to a properly governed data sharing framework within government. The second is a short outline of how we believe data must be managed in order to achieve those outcomes, and the final part is feedback for consideration to clarify aspects of the proposed framework, respectfully provided to government to ensure the intention of the Bill is achieved.

Please feel free to contact me for further information and we would be happy to help inform this public policy debate, and share our learnings.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Mulveny'.

Jennifer Mulveny

Director, Government Relations & Public Policy, Asia-Pacific, Adobe



## Submission on the Data Availability and Transparency Bill Exposure Draft

*6 November 2020*

### **1 - WHY DATA SHARING IS CRITICAL TO DIGITAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE DELIVERY**

#### **Data is vital to improving public services**

We welcome the Government's willingness to explore privacy-friendly ways of sharing data in the public sector. The provisions in the Draft Bill outline a pragmatic way of adopting new methods of data sharing whilst earning the trust of the public. Using data in the delivery of public services is nothing to fear if it is done securely. Digital data can improve the service, experience, trust and satisfaction of citizens in a number of different ways.

Online processes such as completing tax returns must be designed in a way that encourages citizens to transact digitally 'by default'. However, this is not where digital transformation begins and ends.

Once a citizen has a digital experience, there is a great opportunity to improve it. For example, successful e-commerce websites are constantly improving their customer experience for three reasons:

1. Customer expectations for easy-to-use-websites are always growing (and customers have a short attention span for bad websites); and
2. They see demonstrable improvement in revenue growth by improving the experience.
3. A good online experience engenders more trust in brands.

For websites delivering public services, which are clearly not profit making, the core outcome is improved service delivery to citizens through time savings and the resulting citizen satisfaction. Revenue growth can also be measured in terms of avoiding unnecessary costs in call centre resources and improving process efficiencies. If an online experience can ensure people do not need to contact a call centre, or switch to a paper process, it will save money for the government, improve citizen engagement and trust and increase productivity.

Citizens have high expectations of digital experiences and the pace of change in the private sector is driving the demand for digital government that improves service delivery and convenience. As part of this, citizens are increasingly taking for granted that governments

have digitized forms and channels, but expect them to be personalised, integrated multi-channel and multi-agency, focused on key needs, efficient, and consistent. Experience-driven governments providing improved service delivery drive more measurable impact and improving customer experience was ranked as the number one priority for governments globally.<sup>1</sup>

If it is not just about cost savings, what is the experience focus and opportunity for the citizen experience Government can deliver?

Citizen benefits:

- **Time savings** - Today, the average Australian still spends the equivalent of one working day every year waiting in queues, waiting on-hold or mailing forms to complete government transactions via traditional channels. The potential dividend here is impressive – if government agencies made the most of digital experience platforms and new ways of delivering improved service levels to improve the efficiency of citizen transactions, it could effectively give back one day to every adult every year in time savings. This number rises to almost 14 hours for those living in the country and for those needing additional support.
- **Citizen Satisfaction and Trust** - To support the ongoing enhancement of citizen experience, Adobe and Deloitte Access Economics collaborated to produce (2015) and update (2019) a report on the benefits of Digital Experiences for Governments. Citizen trust in government has declined over the 4 years since first report, from 49% to 22% trusting the government. Improved Digital Experiences will not only improve efficiency, but has been shown to improve trust.

Government benefits

- **Service delivery and Data** - Improved and integrated platforms will make it easier for citizens to complete key tasks. A citizen of NSW can be exposed by up to 20 million pages on government. Someone shouldn't have to have a detailed understanding of government departments, agencies and roles to interact effectively and efficiently with government. There should be no closed doors. Improved Digital Experience platforms will also provide government more data – to assist in planning, developing and optimizing the right services to be delivered, and consistently measuring performance.
- **Cost Savings** - On the financial front, the potential benefits for government can be compelling. In 2015, Deloitte Access Economics estimated that governments could save \$17.9 billion over a decade by shifting transactions to digital. Some government agencies have achieved savings on individual initiatives, but overall, governments have struggled to realise the full benefits. Levels of government employees in traditional roles have fallen, but not by much. Estimates of transactions through traditional channels such as shopfronts, call centers and mail rooms are as high as five years ago. Rapid growth in touch points between government and citizens – from 40 transactions per year for each person aged over 15 years up to 55

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<sup>1</sup> Forrester – August 2018, *The Business Impact of Investing in Experience – A Spotlight on Government* - These results are based on findings from Forrester, who gathered data from 1,269 Marketing, Digital and Analytics leaders across Global Enterprises, including 155 Government respondents who are responsible for CX strategy and measurement.

transactions – with increased service delivery and options for accessing services also adds to costs.

- **Trust:** If people trust government, then government has fulfilled its role as a public servant to the citizens it serves, and we have found that improved trust results in improved compliance rates for payments such as taxes.

This doesn't mean government should provide all services online. Services and channels should be there for the majority who want to engage in these channels. But public servants should also invest in direct channels for the people that need it most, such as people with disabilities and those in remote areas.

## **2 – HOW TO MANAGE DATA SHARING FOR THE BEST OUTCOMES**

### **To improve a digital experience, the underlying key to everything is data and insight**

In order to better serve citizens, public sector agencies need to make better data driven decisions. Data can give transparency to how someone is interacting with a public service and also provide the evidence base to reform a service or transaction. For example, it can show where in a process that citizens are dropping out of doing something online and contact a call centre to complete a transaction. Data can help agencies to address these bottlenecks and deliver the right experience to the right citizen at the right time, without compromising on individual privacy or changing the whole process.

### **Make it Personal – Using Data to Securely Drive Efficiencies**

Getting the right information to the right person at the right time is important for good public services delivery, and it can also help to cut costs of delivery with precision targeting.

The more an agency can personalise content delivery, the sooner citizens are connected with the information, forms and applications they want. This results in faster and more efficient workflows, fewer errors from manual, paper-intensive processes, and ultimately delivers a better experience for the citizen and public service.

Data can also help in this area to supercharge personalisation. Adobe's view of personalisation is simply putting the most relevant experience in front of someone based on what the provider knows about them. Once again, data and segmentation are key to understanding what content, experience or message works well with different groups of people. And this can be done without compromising personal data.

Technologies, like Adobe's Marketing Cloud, have very powerful automated personalisation which uses algorithms on collected data to determine what data points are best for segmentation and which experiences work well with each segment. In a public sector context this could mean targeting messaging to a group of citizens required to do a certain transaction like filling in a self-assessment tax return or displaying content in a way that is most suitable for someone with a particular accessibility need. Further, it can mean critical services in an emergency are communicated with priority to those citizens who most need it.

## Safeguards for Using Data in Public Services

It is important to recognise the concern relating to data being used in public services and to ensure citizens' data is adequately protected. Sharing data does not need to be scary or dismissed for use in the public sector because the perceived risks are too high.

In addition, the use of anonymised data to assist research carried out for public benefit must ensure that data is handled carefully. Content-level security technologies could form part of the specific safeguards developed in this area to help ensure that data is only seen by those authorised to see it, and to track how that data is accessed. This offers a new level of oversight for sensitive data, a prerequisite for gaining the trust of citizens, and improving operational efficiency.

By using technology and appropriate safeguards these concerns can be addressed. When developing the processes for data sharing Adobe believes that the following principles should be considered:

- 1. The application of content-level security protocols.** Content-level security can help ensure that content is only accessed by those with the authority to do so. In particular, this means:
  - *Dynamic systems of redaction* which can enable users with different levels of clearance to see different levels of content within the same document or file in line with their authorisation. This helps ensure that data can continue to flow where it is needed, and obviates the need to develop multiple versions of data with different redaction levels according to the permissions of the reader.
  - The application of *rights management and analytics technologies* which can be used to enforce usage limits on different kinds of content (preventing screenshots, printouts, forwarding or opening by unauthorised personnel) and also track the use of and access to data by different employees to reveal anomalies in data usage that might indicate inappropriate usage.
- 2. Reduction of error during original data collection.** Any provisions to enable access to collected data should be linked to eliminating errors in data collection at the original point of data capture. Specifically, antiquated forms workflows that require offline signature and the manual rekeying or scanning of data into a system which increases the risk of incorrect data. Modern forms technologies can include checks on the quality of data being entered in each field, partial form filling from identity management systems or previous data provided, and include analytics capabilities that can detect repeat entries from the same device. There is a compelling case to improve data collection at the same time as implementing data sharing to reduce errors and better protect data.
- 3. Use of privacy-friendly third-party solutions to help detect multiple submissions.** Such solutions could help government departments identify linkages between devices to detect multiple submissions without revealing the identity of the user

behind the device. Solutions such as Adobe's device co-op has this capability (currently only available in the US and designed for use with private sector customers).

Concerns around data privacy are understood and tackled in the private sector through established practices and safeguards. The public sector can draw from this experience to address common concerns of citizens related to data sharing. This draft legislation marks an important step in the journey to bring true digital transformation to our public services. And the private sector has powerful tools to help deliver this ambition. Collaboration between the public and private sector will help deliver the best digital experience for Australian citizens. With the pace of change in technology and citizens' expectations, there is no time to delay.

### **3 - OTHER COMMENTS**

We note for clarification the following points in the Draft Bill and supporting documentation.

#### **Participation by Accredited Users**

The Accreditation Framework Discussion Paper outlines the accreditation process for Australian organisations to be eligible to participate in the scheme. We respectfully note for consideration that the critical element is the sovereignty of the data rather than the organisation participating as much of the critical digital infrastructure in Australia is delivered by world leading multi-national technology companies. For Australia and the Australian Government to ensure it delivers world-class digital services, it must be open to using world-class digital providers, which may not be Australian-owned.

While we recognise and applaud the risks being identified, we propose the most effective way to manage this risk is at the content or data level to ensure that sovereign data sets are managed through world-class content-level security protocols and established practices and safeguards to ensure security and privacy of citizen data is always maintained at the highest possible levels.

#### **Accredited Data Service Providers**

It would be helpful to clarify whether the accreditation for Data Service Providers is intended to include service providers that hold and process data for Government under the strict terms of existing or new contracts, but are not involved in the sharing of data as it is defined under this Bill.

As a cloud-based data service provider to government that holds and processes data on behalf of the government, there is some confusion as to whether certain companies that process data would be required to become accredited to continue to provide data services to Government.