**Ebook**

# Simplifying the big data dilemma:

What established companies relying on complex, multicloud ecosystems need to know about bringing clarity to their data lifecycle to fuel growth in a digital economy.

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# Introduction

Cutting through the noise to detect meaningful signals has become a cornerstone of business success, enabling companies to stand apart in a competitive, digital economy.

Data analytics and AI-driven improvements are not just a nice opportunity to add finesse to how you operate and measure outcomes. There's a real risk that digital natives and other competitors will harness analytics and AI before you do — to achieve the kind of prescience and growth that propels them beyond reach.

For long-standing, traditional companies, the fear of being left behind is often overshadowed by uncertainty about how to bring order to the chaos of an exponentially expanding ecosystem of data sources and formats, cloud infrastructure and software applications.

The result? Many large, established companies don't have comprehensive data solutions or the organisational culture needed to effectively capture, process, analyse and apply data end-to-end. Too much data goes un-mined, analytical outputs are unreliable, and projects designed to operationalise or productionise insights stall.

Using your data to its full potential, and deriving maximum value from your data investment, requires clear thinking about the problems you want to solve, what activities will have the most impact, and how you'll coordinate all the moving parts. You can't ignore any one important piece of the transformation journey, but you can't do it all at once (or, in most cases, on your own).

To make it easier to untangle big data, you need to transform your systems and capabilities step-by-step, guided by an overarching strategy, strong technical capabilities, a mindset of continuous evolution, and expert help when needed.

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# Digitisation, data, and augmenting human intuition.

Information is the lifeblood of most businesses today. That's why data, analytics and artificial intelligence have become an essential part of the digital transformation discussion. Or, in other words, being able to extract useful information from your big data and business systems is a fundamental aspect of remaining competitive in a digital economy.

Of course, like any major change initiative, it's not always easy for large companies to become data-informed businesses where both operational and strategic decisions are guided and enhanced by analytical insights and machine learning. It takes time to implement projects and influence attitudes when you have large teams spread across multiple locations, countries and markets — and that's a problem when the pace of technological change is so rapid.

Although most companies now have numerous digitised workflows in place, are moving more workloads to the cloud, and use hundreds of different software applications — achieving clear, comprehensive and actionable data insights from across an enterprise is still a challenge.

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# 3 reasons traditional companies must fix ineffective data solutions

Large corporations need to urgently create enterprise-wide data strategies and architectures in the face of these realities:

**1. Data velocity and volume are exploding the business landscape:**

Data is being generated by businesses at incredible speed and in massive and exponentially growing amounts. That puts pressure on organisations' ability to store, retain, and leverage data effectively.

Enterprise data is being created faster than storage capacity, especially IoT data — according to IDC. The cost of storage is a barrier to retaining potentially useful data long-term.[1] Willingness to invest more is tied to companies' capacity to prove a positive ROI on data analytics initiatives.

Data created and collected by large companies is often highly dispersed across locations and a mix of on-site data centres and public and private clouds. This multicloud environment means a multitude of data workflows, management tools, and security measures — posing issues for the effective consolidation of data for analysis.
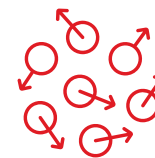
Research firm Forrester says that up to 70% of all data held by enterprises goes unused for analytics.[2] In large part that's because a huge amount of the data being captured and stored is unstructured, which is not as easy to search and analyse without the right data platform and data analytics solutions in place — meaning many organisations ignore important data.[3]

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## 2. Large incumbent corporations face more legacy issues:

Outdated and disconnected systems, unmethodical approaches to transformative efforts, and poor planning can significantly slow a company's progress towards reliable data pipelines and useful analytical insights.

**Legacy issues like...**
- Lack of enterprise-wide data strategy, architecture, and data governance
- Too many bespoke, interim solutions, systems being used in isolation, lack of integrations, or lack of user-friendly interfaces
- Poor quality, incomplete and unreliable data and metadata, or data with unclear ownership or privacy details

**Lead to issues including...**
- No direction, wasted time and stymied adoption
- Difficulty gaining and allocating resources
- Trouble streamlining and scaling data ingestion
- No single source of truth for decision-making
- Fear of using data, or skewed analytical outputs
- Security risks, legal and compliance issues

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**3. Fragmented ecosystems are more complex to manage and enhance:**

A business with data silos, disjointed data tools and internal friction already face so many hurdles to bringing its data together to enable effective analysis. Systems that are put in place then need to be professionally managed, secured and optimised over time. This is made more difficult by challenges such as:

Managing data and technical architectures across a multicloud environment that continues to evolve with new technologies, apps, data types and security threats.

Building a team and capabilities to help you handle the scale and scope of managing a complex data ecosystem, in line with budgets and despite data science and IT skill shortages.

Continually reviewing business drivers, compliance obligations and customer requirements, and adapting your data maturity and analytical outputs to match.

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# Taking back your advantage from digital natives

Some businesses were 'born' in the cloud and revolutionised the delivery of goods and services by leveraging the speed and convenience of digital networks and the data generated, such as personalised e-commerce, food service and on-demand entertainment. Tech startups have been able to quickly become big players — displacing some incumbents along the way.

Conversely, established companies tend to have morphed their digital systems and data solutions gradually and erratically, with multiple initiatives owned by different business units or regions. The data solutions that do exist often use data in a limited way, which means they don't offer holistic insights, rarely deliver the maximum value, or give the right people easy access to insights.

Still, many organisations continue to do well based on their size, resources and market share. So, what's the urgency? Traditional market leaders that can embrace data analytics to innovate, improve their operations, and better understand and meet the needs of customers, will ensure they retain and deepen these inherent advantages — and go from good to great.

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# Why it matters? Capitalising on data delivers returns.

Digital leaders are more likely to grow their earnings compared to digital laggards because their maturity leads to greater visibility, more innovation and a better capacity for change and resilience.[4] Champions of applying customer analytics are three times as likely to generate above-average turnover growth as competitors with sporadic data analysis habits, as well as 2.6 times more likely to achieve a higher ROI.[5]

# Intuition can only take you so far

The instincts of experienced leaders and talented employees are core to the success of any business. But it's not a contradiction to also rely on data insights, machine learning outputs and business intelligence reporting.

Becoming data-informed lets humans do their best work, by:
1. adding speed or automation to mundane decisions that don't require human problem-solving;
2. opening up new avenues of thought that lead to valuable improvements, innovations and experiments; and
3. demonstrating performance and return on investment, which helps you reinforce or re-prioritise existing plans and activities.

Digital literacy and a robust data culture are essential for avoiding guesswork, groupthink and unconscious bias — all of which hamstring evolving business models and modern approaches to customer experience. The alternative is a workplace culture where leaders continue to fall back on 'how we've always done things'.

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# Why it matters? Decision-making is key to surviving change.

In a crisis, a company's weaknesses are most likely to be its downfall, and not having the right information at your fingertips is one reason organisations are hit hard by changed conditions. IDC found that 'digital resilience' — with foundational capabilities across data, analytics and AI — is critical to enterprise survival through incidents like the global COVID-19 pandemic: "Shared data, analytics, and AI enable C-suite leaders, including the CIO, to accurately assess and quickly respond to changing operating environments."[6]



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# Let's take the next step together

With a committed partner, it's easier to achieve an end-to-end solution that brings simplicity to how you manage and maximise the value of data — across multiple technologies, clouds, and applications.

Rackspace Technology has proven multicloud expertise and world-class talent to design, deliver and professionally support the best data solutions for complex, enterprise environments.

Learn more at www.rackspace.com or call us:

**Australia: 1800 722 577**

**New Zealand: 800 451 613**

**Hong Kong: 0800 900 330**

**India: 000800 100 8796**

**Singapore: 800 120 6726**

**Malaysia: 1800 812 620**

# About Rackspace Technology

Rackspace Technology is a leading end-to-end multicloud technology services company. We can design, build and operate our customers' cloud environments across all major technology platforms, irrespective of technology stack or deployment model. We partner with our customers at every stage of their cloud journey, enabling them to modernize applications, build new products and adopt innovative technologies.

Rackspace Technology is your trusted partner across cloud, applications, security, data and infrastructure.
· 3,000+ cloud experts
· Hosting provider for more than half of the Fortune 100
· 20+ years of hosting experience
· Customers in 150+ countries
· Elite Partner, Pure Partner Program (Full spectrum cloud-native services provider)

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