

The Data Zoo

**How user behaviours
affect information quality**

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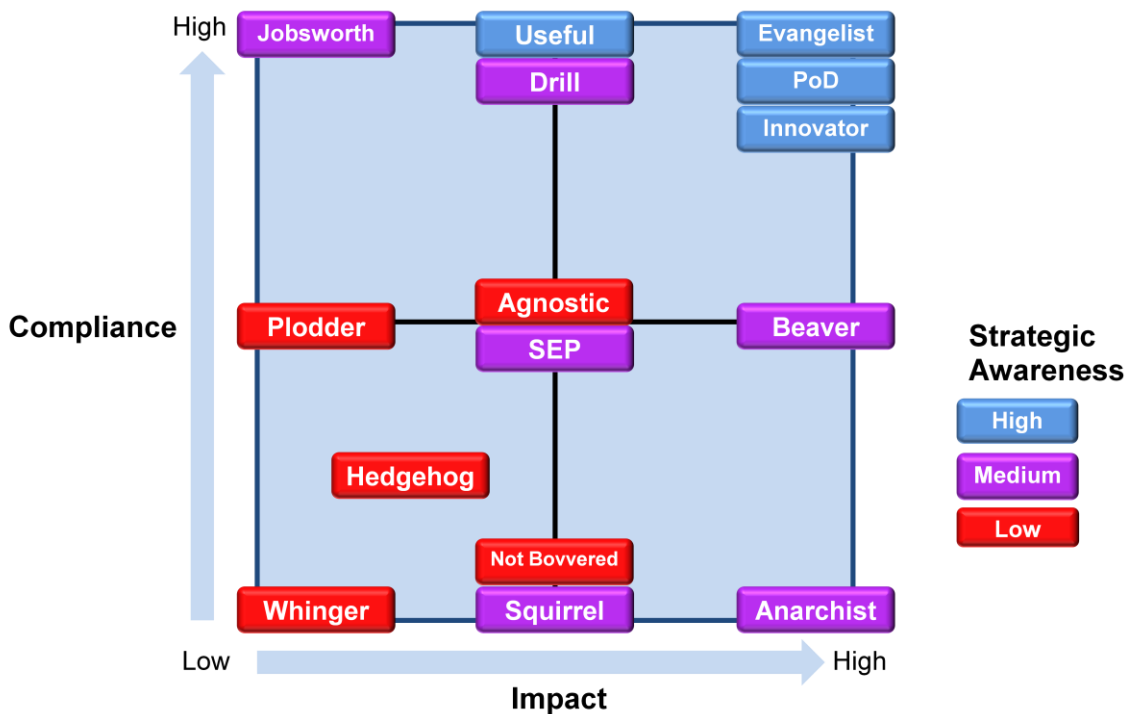
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Introduction

In this White Paper I will present a number of different types of behaviour towards data that people may recognise from the organisations that they are involved in. I will also consider the impacts of teams and the wider organisation on data behaviours.

The shape of the zoo

I am sure most people will recognise that different people interact with data (and each other) in different ways; however, it is not always easy to understand the different ways that people behave towards data. Analysis of different human factors approaches and theories from a data perspective has allowed us to develop a simple structure that helps to define the different data behaviours and how they relate to each other.



The diagram above shows the different data behaviours plotted onto a matrix using three key dimensions – Compliance, Impact and Strategic Awareness:

- Compliance is a measure for how well people comply with the written and unwritten procedures and standards of an organisation. If new circumstances arise how will they behave? Where there is uncertainty what will they do?
- Impact is a measure of the impact of a person’s data related activities (whether correctly applied or not!). This can include energy and enthusiasm for populating corporate systems or for developing and updating local spreadsheet based solutions which may or may not have official awareness and approval.
- Strategic Awareness is a measure of the awareness that a person will have for the overall objectives of the organisation and how their actions will help achieve, or hinder, these objectives.

Low compliance behaviours

There are five species in the low compliance area of the Data Zoo: the Data Whinger, the Data Hedgehog, the Data Squirrel, the Not Bovered and the Data Anarchist.

The Data Whinger

The Data Whinger typically exhibits low levels of activity relating to data, they would rather sit and complain that it is all too difficult, that the application is all wrong, that the company is wrong etc. They tend to lack the strategic awareness needed to see their problems more objectively.



Positives

The Data Whinger, through their low level of activity, tends to create little poor quality data (thankfully) but what they do create may well need extra checking. As they can be quite a vocal type, you will usually know who they are and where they are. If you can listen to their complaints and ignore the emotion, they can give some clues as to what needs correcting.

Negatives

The Data Whinger can make a lot of noise and demotivate others. Even when you respond to their complaints, they may respond with another complaint “It’s not how I would have done it...”, “But you still haven’t taken into account...”, “The old system was better...” and “I still don’t see why we should change from the current process/system/standard...” etc.

Impact on others

The Data Whinger can make everyone’s working lives difficult, they will demotivate, derail and generally be obstructive. If you are the manager/data steward/project manager etc. who is trying to address their concerns and improve the standards, systems and processes of your organisation then you are putting yourself in the firing line of their complaints, so you need a suit of body armour to stay sane.

The Data Hedgehog

The Data Hedgehog tends to be insecure in their role and will try and hide areas of their role where they are uncertain or cannot use systems effectively. When a manager or colleague tries to find out what they are doing and how, the Data Hedgehog will, like a real Hedgehog, roll into a ball and stick out their prickles.



Positives

The Data Hedgehog tends to be a diligent employee and usually will want to do a good job.

Negatives

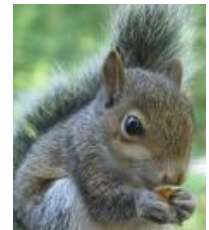
The Data Hedgehog, due to their insecurity, can tend to be fearful of showing any areas of weakness or where they do not fully understand the requirements of their role. They will do what is required to get the basic aspects of their role completed; however, their data errors and omissions will tend to be prominent. When they react defensively to any enquiries about their role this can make it difficult to assess where help and support may be required.

Impact on others

The Data Hedgehog will often not be a team player and will try and carve out their own particular role which they will try to avoid sharing with others. Data problems will impact downstream business activities; however, their response to any questioning will tend to be evasive and negative. They will need careful handling to encourage them to share areas of difficulty and to accept help.

The Data Squirrel

The Data Squirrel will not see a need to conform to company standards for data, systems and processes. They will tend to be busy doing their jobs – what they see as important to them personally, but anything that they do not see as important to them will not get done. They may believe that “knowledge is power” and will be able to produce an email/memo/document to support any argument.



Positives

They will have data and information on many topics, some of it may not exist elsewhere, so can be a valuable source of information, if you are able to access their data hoard.

Negatives

The Data Squirrel typically will not make much noise. They will quietly hoard data, so long as it supports them getting their job done, but not make anyone aware of it. If you find a Data Squirrel and try to get access to their hoard of information, they may start to get more vocal and defensive.

Impact on others

They will often be very popular with colleagues, as they are seen as a useful source of information and are often heard to say “I’ve got that in a mail/spreadsheet/file somewhere.... Ah, here it is.” Clearly from an organisational perspective, they are bad news, as they perpetuate their own private hoards of information which should be in corporate data stores.

The Not Bovered

The Not Bovered is careless about data security, use of passwords and IT security generally as they may believe all these security practices are unnecessary and don’t apply to them. They have been known to browse personal data in systems to look for juicy information on high profile clients. They can sometimes be spotted through their habit of storing usernames and passwords on a ‘Post-It’ attached to their monitor. They may also have an unusually high number of lost/stolen/damaged laptops and mobile IT and may transmit data between sites or outside the organisation using insecure methods.



Positives

The Not Bovered has few positive attributes.

Negatives

The activities of the Not Bovered present a high risk of data loss/leakage and loss of commercial advantage to outside organisations. They may also increase the risk of prosecution under the Data Protection Act.

Impact on others

If the behaviour of the Not Bovered is allowed to continue, it will tend to generate a culture of non-compliance within the organisation, which can lead to non-compliance in other areas, for example, processes and regulatory reporting.

The Data Anarchist

The Data Anarchist puts lots of energy into all the activities they do with data, it's a shame that none of it is in corporate data systems! They will have a multitude of spreadsheets and databases, created unofficially and lovingly maintained to increase the perceived importance of their roles. Any attempt to make them conform may result in abuse and/or arguments that the corporate system is not as good as the system they have created. Some of them are very vocal about their activities, others keep quiet and hope they won't be spotted.



Positives

The Data Anarchist puts lots of energy into data activities and may gather data that is not held elsewhere. They love new technologies and new approaches, but only if it is their idea.

Negatives

The Data Anarchist by their nature cannot conform to company standards and conventions, they love being a maverick and cannot be made to toe the line.

Their systems and spreadsheets often duplicate corporate data sets and are likely to create future problems in de-duplication. As the Data Anarchist's activities may not be obvious, corporate decision makers may not be aware that they are not using up to date data.

Impact on others

The Data Anarchist can be a problem to resolve, they will not conform and love exploring new areas and generally rubbish any corporate approaches. They perpetuate and worsen data quality problems, but they see themselves as doing a better job than the IT department. To their colleagues they may be recognised as not conforming, but they will often provide a good "service" to colleagues, shame they cannot provide the same service for others!

Medium compliance behaviours

There are four species in the medium compliance area of the Data Zoo: the Plodder, the Data Agnostic, the SEP and the Data Beaver.

The Plodder

The Plodder often shows little or no energy, they do what is needed, but will tend to just meet/miss deadlines. They will comply with standards, as long as it does not take too much effort. Any problems or errors will be ignored if possible. If the standards do not seem right, or the data does not fit the standard, they will make a “least bad” decision, but not tell anyone about it.



Positives

With the right support, they can be encouraged to become more compliant and to see how data can help their organisation, if the input is right. They will not want to be seen as doing a bad job, so if you can show them how to do their job better, then they should be more receptive to new approaches.

Negatives

They will tend to do an acceptable job, introducing some data errors, but not want to “make a fuss” or raise an issue in case they receive criticism for it. Often they are the most common data personalities, but you will need to go and look for them.

Impact on others

As they typically want to do a good job, without too much effort, they should be relatively easy to persuade to follow standard approaches, if you can show them that their job will be easier this way.

They can tend to be easily led, so if any of their work colleagues has a strong personality and exhibits some of the other “outer” behaviour types in the Data Zoo, then they can tend to get “pulled” in the same direction.

The Data Agnostic

The Data Agnostic typically will show a reasonable amount of effort and initiative to get the basics of their role accomplished; however, they have to be convinced of any new approach or standard before they will start to adopt it.



Positives

When you can finally persuade the Data Agnostic that a new approach or standard is correct, they will tend to follow this reasonably diligently until the next new approach arises.

Negatives

You need to spend time to “sell” any new or changed approach to the Data Agnostic before they will adopt it. If areas of uncertainty arise, they may well “park” this work until someone gives clear guidance.

Impact on others

The need to constantly “sell” to the Data Agnostic can mean that they are demanding staff to manage, however, this need to convince them of the correct approach may result in you reviewing and refining your message which may identify areas for improvement. Once they have been convinced of a new approach, then the Data Agnostic will tend to follow this new approach until the next area of uncertainty or change arises.

The SEP (Somebody Else’s Problem)

The SEP has a strongly held view that anything that is not quite correct is “Somebody Else’s Problem”, hence the SEP acronym. The SEP will tend to be very resistant to change and is likely to carry on with current working practices. They can be particularly slippery to deal with, as they will always try and deflect anything new to others in the organisation. The SEP is related to the Jobsworth (see below), but can be harder to manage, as everything is Somebody Else’s Problem.



Positives

Although they can be difficult to manage, you will typically know where you stand with an SEP – which is exactly where you were the last time you dealt with them.

Negatives

The SEP is particularly resistant to change, any new initiative, approach or standard will be met with a response of “If IT are so bothered, why don’t they do it?”, “Why can’t ‘they’ supply better data?” or “Why can’t someone sort out all these data problems for us?”. Excessive time may need to be spent in trying to win over the SEP to a new standard, process or way of working, even then, the likelihood of them changing their approach is low.

Impact on others

Individually, the SEP can reduce the flexibility and effectiveness of a team or process, however, if you have more than one SEP in an area, then the overall impact can be very negative. They may require more time to manage them, in order to convince them to change; however, they are likely to revert to previous work practices as soon as your back is turned.

The Data Beaver

Watch out for the Data Beaver, you will already have seen them in action – fiendishly busy entering and updating data, but very hit and miss whether it is the right data in the right place to the right standard! Similar to real live beavers who may chop down trees that they shouldn’t, dam streams causing flooding and so on.



The Data Beaver is heroically proud of their productivity - “Just look how hard I worked to enter all that data in 12 hours solid”, “I worked until midnight sorting out the data, some of it did not appear right, so I made it right”, “I just bulk imported x,000 data corrections” etc. It’s a shame that they do not always conform to data standards and may correct what they see as “wrong” data without reference to others.

Positives

Data Beavers have lots of energy and enthusiasm and are happiest when they are busy. The challenge is to make sure they are doing the right things, at the right time and in the right way!

Negatives

Data Beavers can wreak havoc on data systems through their enthusiasm to do what they feel is right. This misguided activity can sometimes be difficult to spot and far harder to correct.

Impact on others

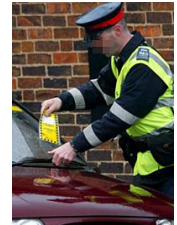
Since they are so busy tidying up data, they may not be seen as particularly useful by their colleagues who probably don't understand what they are doing (often nobody else does either). So the impact on colleagues is not particularly severe, however the impact to data stewards, database/process owners can be far more severe.

High compliance behaviours

There are five species in the high compliance area of the Data Zoo: the Jobsworth, the Data Drill, the Useful Person, the Innovator, the Data Evangelist and the Prophet of Doom.

The Jobsworth

The Jobsworth is a role we will all be familiar with from dealings in our everyday lives with officialdom – they are the people who say “Computer says no!”, “But the rules say...”, “That’s not in my role description” etc. Similarly, in the data world, the Jobsworth will typically be a low productivity individual who uses any ambiguity or lack of clarity in data, process or system standards as a reason not to do anything.



Positives

The Jobsworth will not enter any data unless it conforms to the rules/meets all process requirements, so they will be less likely to introduce poor data than others. Their pedantic approach means that they can be a good way to test if there is any ambiguity in a new process or lack of clarity in data standards, you then have a challenge of correcting these issues in a way that they are happy with!

Negatives

The Jobsworth’s overly rigorous approach and inflexibility will mean that they can be frustrating and difficult people to work with. They typically have low productivity rates and will put more effort into complaining about perceived shortcomings rather than doing their jobs.

Impact on others

They can be very exasperating to work with for managers and colleagues. Managers will find their constant refusal to address any ambiguities and uncertainties in a positive way very frustrating. Colleagues and internal customers will also find the Jobsworth very difficult to work with and may then choose to do the work themselves or go elsewhere for support.

The Data Drill

The Data Drill is never happy with any analysis - why be happy with a value calculated to 10 decimal places, when with some more processing you can provide the answer to 15 decimal places? You can spot them in an office environment as their workstation will have piles of SQL textbooks, they will have a monitor surrounded by scraps of analysis and their desk will be covered with report printouts many layers deep.



Positives

When precision is required the Data Drill will keep analysing until they have an answer, and will possibly also have two or three other analysis outcomes to confirm the result. They are typically happiest when they have complex analysis problems requiring the analysis of large volumes of data.

Negatives

The desire to seek ever more precise answers means that they risk never completing any task, as they will be continuing to try and get a more precise answer. They can also be reluctant to make any decisions, as they will always want to undertake a bit more analysis before they are happy to make a decision.

Impact on others

The Data Drill can be an asset to a team when complex analysis of large volumes of data is required, so long as someone is on hand to tell them when to stop analysing the data! They are less comfortable working where there is more ambiguity or where it is unlikely that precise answers can be determined.

The Useful Person

If you are in a high performing organisation, it is likely that you will have a number of Useful Persons in your team. These are the staff who work to the standards, are enthusiastic and typically will be very productive. They will be comfortable working with written or verbal instructions to address any identified process issues. They will tend to be happy with their role and may not see it as part of their role to encourage others to behave differently (see the Data Evangelist).



Positives

They are positive and useful team members who have a high work ethic and high productivity. They work to standards and are also happy to work to managers instructions where there is less documented clarity.

Negatives

Overall they are good to have around and exhibit good behaviours towards data and processes, but may not engage with others whose approach is less good.

Impact on others

As mentioned before, these are useful people to have in any team and can have a significant effect on the productivity and quality of the work of a team.

The Innovator

The Data Innovator will usually be an ideas person, quickly responding to new requests for analysis by using innovative combinations of data from different data sources. The Innovator will typically be focussed on technology and may be seen by colleagues as a 'geek'.



Positives

The Innovator will be constantly coming up with new and improved ways to deliver meaning from data using new techniques and reporting tools. They will tend to quickly learn all the capabilities of new analysis tools and the meaning and structure of new data sources.

Negatives

As the innovator is more comfortable with technology than people, they may be very uncomfortable if they need to present information to others and may tend to let others talk on their behalf.

Impact on others

The Innovator is a valuable member of the team, particularly as part of business change and IT projects. Although they may be seen as a bit of a 'geek', their abilities with data and systems will be widely recognised.

The Data Evangelist

The Data Evangelist is someone who has "got" the importance of data to an organisation. They may have had a light bulb moment/revelation where this suddenly became clear. They have boundless energy and will be actively involved in trying to convert others in the organisation to improve their approaches to using and providing data.



Positives

A positive force for change, they will tend to be outgoing people who love to preach about the value of good data practices. They will use their energy and enthusiasm to try to improve the behaviours and approaches of others.

Negatives

As the Data Evangelist can be so busy converting colleagues and stakeholders to better data approaches, their productivity may perhaps not be as high as others, for example the Useful Person.

Impact on others

The Data Evangelist can be a positive force for change and, when given the right backing, can improve people's approaches to data and processes. Most organisations should have at least one or two Data Evangelists to actively improve data approaches, backed up by some of the other data personalities to ensure overall productivity is high.

The PoD (Prophet of Doom)

The PoD is closely related to the Data Evangelist and exhibits high compliance, high impact data behaviours. Whereas the Data Evangelist is able to communicate a vision to staff of the improvements that could be made and the greater efficiencies if data quality was improved, the PoD has a wholly different role. The PoD paints a picture of the problems with existing approaches to data - poor quality reports, poor decision making due to poor data, reduced profitability due to these poor decisions, the better performance of competitors and the risk of regulatory sanction.



The PoD differs from the Whinger in that they have a strong sense of the strategic position of the organisation and the challenges ahead. The PoD creates a 'call to action' illustrating why the status quo cannot be maintained if the organisation is to survive and succeed. They can create a sense of the 'burning platform' that will make an organisation consider changes and actions it might otherwise think are too difficult or too expensive.

Without a PoD, it will be more challenging to get an organisation to start on a journey of change....

Positives

The PoD is a positive force for change by making people realise that potentially difficult changes are required in order for the organisation to survive and thrive. They will tend to be effective communicators who are able to present the case for change in clear and effective language.

Negatives

As the PoD can appear to exhibit many of the traits of the Whinger, there is a risk that staff receive their message and do not appreciate the serious situation an organisation may find itself in.

Impact on others

Without a PoD explaining the need for changed approaches to data, it is likely that any new approaches will be much harder to implement.

Not forgetting, the Data Ostrich

It is also worth including the behaviours of the Data Ostrich – they don't appear in the Data Zoo chart because they actively avoid data wherever they can. They prefer to rely on instinct/intuition/gut feeling etc. for making decisions. They will avoid data wherever they can and adopt a macho approach whereby they are proud to operate without relying on data.



Positives

The Data Ostrich is often a senior/experienced employee who may have grown with the company from the days when data was scarce to the present era when data is plentiful. They typically have a wealth of experience and deep technical knowledge.

Negatives

In the past they may have been so engrossed in the technical intricacies of their role that they did not feel the need to learn about computing and use it as an aid to their role. They may now realise that they need to pick up these skills, but feel they are too old or too busy to learn, so may go to great lengths to show they can operate without data in an effort to hide their lack of computer literacy.

Impact on others

As these can be very strong willed individuals, they may be very resistant to change, but as has been noted earlier, may have deep and extensive technical knowledge which can be of benefit to their organisation. By relying on gut instinct there is a high risk that they may make large and expensive mistakes through poor decision making. If you can provide them with a more IT literate “understudy” to provide them with the Business Intelligence support that they need, then their technical skills can be exploited at lower risk.

How data behaviours interact

Clearly in most organisations there will be a variety of data behaviours, some positive and some less so. There are many theories about how different behaviours interact within teams, arguably the most well known of these is the Belbin Team Inventory. In the 1970's Dr Meredith Belbin and his team at Henley Management College undertook research on team behaviours and in particular, what made a team successful. Their research identified a number of generic team roles: the "Plant", Monitor/evaluator, Co-ordinator, Resource Investigators, Implementers, Completer/Finishers, Teamworkers, Shapers and Specialists. They defined a team role as "A tendency to behave, contribute and interrelate with others in a particular way."

A common theme of most group behaviour theories, particularly Belbin, is that for a team to perform at a high level, there need to be each of these behaviours or personalities types present. Similarly in the Data Zoo most of the data behaviours have valuable positive aspects that can improve overall approaches to data, if they are exploited effectively. Depending on the objectives and role of a team, a different balance of data roles may be required.



Whilst we would probably want to change people's data behaviours to those that we believe are more appropriate, we need to recognise that data behaviours, similar to other behaviours, can be difficult to change. It is advisable to change the negative behaviours that can be changed, reinforce positive behaviours and, where possible, ensure that staff are in a role that fits their natural data behaviours.

It is also worth noting that many of the people who have become familiar with the Data Zoo recognise that at different times in their working lives, they have exhibited a number of different data behaviours. The culture and processes of an organisation encourage different data behaviours to become more predominant.

Cages - Individuals as part of a team

Most individuals work as part of one or more teams which can be formal hierarchical teams, project based teams or virtual teams in a matrix management situation. The nature of a team can vary greatly from groups of similarly skilled employees undertaking similar tasks (such as call centre operations) to groups where the specialist skills of each member is required to accomplish an overall goal (for example, a team in an operating theatre). Data is typically a key input and output of such team activities.



Social identity theory suggests that people have an innate need to feel that they belong to a group. This desire to fit in with the norms of a group means that individuals will tend to adopt the attitudes, behaviours and practices of the group. Individual group members who are not seen to conform to these practices may be ostracised or suffer informal sanctions from other group members.

By being part of a team, a person may become deindividualised if they perceive that it is harder to identify their actions and work outputs which can result in lower levels of productivity and compliance.

Being a member of a successful team can increase an individual's motivation and performance. However, if the general behaviour and attitudes of a team are poor, then moving an individual who has good data behaviours and attitude into such a group is unlikely to result in positive changes to overall group attitudes, it is more likely that this individual will acquire the practices and behaviours of the group.

The overall zoo - Teams within the organisation

Just as the behaviours of an individual are influenced by the behaviours of their immediate team, the behaviours of teams within the organisation will also be influenced by the policies and actions of the organisation as a whole.

The interdependency between teams is a key factor in data behaviours:

- 'Pooled' tasks require low levels of coordination and may make it easier to identify poor data behaviours, for example, comparing different maintenance workshops
- 'Sequential' tasks, such as delivery of a capital investment programme, will require medium levels of co-ordination as there are hand offs between teams, therefore poor data quality will impact downstream teams. Depending on the inter-team culture this may highlight improvements or lead to 'finger pointing'
- 'Reciprocal' tasks, such as developing a strategic business plan, require high levels of co-ordination between teams as a downstream team in one process will be the upstream team in another process. Again, depending on the inter-team culture this may highlight improvements or lead to finger pointing which may also allow encourage the activities of Data Squirrels and Data Anarchists



Irrespective of the published values of the organisation, the culture, values and behaviours within an organisation are heavily influenced by the actions of the leaders of the organisation which will in turn influence the behaviours of staff within the organisation.

This is relevant across all business activities, but can be particularly significant where data is concerned, for example:

- If decisions are based upon little, or no, analysis of data
- By not challenging data quality issues as they arise
- By not questioning the provenance of the data used to inform a decision
- Assessing performance using subjective measures without suitable qualitative measures
- Tolerating the use of local spreadsheet data stores

These, and similar actions, are likely to signal to employees that good data behaviours are not valued by the organisation.

Data demotivators

At different levels in an organisation there are other factors which will tend to encourage poor behaviours towards data. These can include:

- The leaders of an organisation not appearing to value good quality data will not encourage staff to adopt better approaches to data
- Inappropriate or poorly defined goals may result in short term productivity gains at the expense of data quality
- Lack of recognition by managers of good data behaviours will not encourage staff to improve data
- 'Initiative fatigue' may result in low morale and a tendency for Data Anarchists and Data Squirrels to maintain their own data solutions
- Poorly communicated changes may result in staff failing to understand the change process and may result in Data Squirrels adding to their data store if they believe the organisation may be about to dispose of data they see as valuable
- Overly complex approval processes will encourage Data Anarchists to provide solutions to business needs, rather than the formal IT department
- Poor inter-team relationships will inhibit effective business processes and reduce activities to improve data between teams
- Poor team behaviours towards data will demotivate those who want to improve approaches to data
- Poor process and task design may result in tasks where the value of the task is not understood by the individual leading to lower quality data outputs
- A management tolerance of low level compliance to data standards and processes may foster a culture of non-compliance which could spread to regulatory, safety or other critical areas



People are the solution...

If the behaviours of people are part of the problem then similarly people are a vital part of the solution. Improving behaviours and attitudes should provide long lasting, sustained improvements in performance.

There are a number of actions that organisations could consider in order to improve behaviours towards data, which in turn will lead to wider business benefits:








- Communication to all staff on the importance of good data behaviours and the value that good data can provide to an organisation
- Ensuring organisational leaders demonstrate good approaches to data
- Providing training on recognising and improving data behaviours in order to start improving individual behaviours towards data. For example, DPA have developed training courses based around the concepts in this White Paper
- Assessing the data behaviours of teams to identify improvement areas
- Evaluating inter-team relationships to foster cooperative approaches
- Identify organisational influencers of data behaviours and change those that lead to less desirable behaviours
- Implementing an overall data governance framework and actively manage data quality



The benefits of such improvement activities will help organisations to improve the reliability of data to support business decisions, reduce the amount of corrective actions where data quality is uncertain and start a process of sustained improvements to the management of data and processes.

Strategies for change

For each of the behaviours in the data zoo, a different approach will be required to improve how they interact with data, as illustrated in the table below:

Data behaviour	Suggested strategies for change
<p>Data Evangelist</p> 	<p>A positive behaviour type who will encourage others to adopt better approaches to data, they may need gentle reminders not to forget the day job</p>
<p>PoD</p> 	<p>The Prophet of Doom (PoD) is a positive behaviour type that works well with the Data Evangelist. As their actions may appear similar to those of the Whinger, they need to be careful that they do not become a Whinger!</p>
<p>Data Innovator</p> 	<p>A positive behaviour type who is most useful when value needs to be gained from new systems and data. Provide support to allow them to become more confident when presenting to others.</p>
<p>Useful Person</p> 	<p>As they are solid team members, they should only need some encouragement to become more of an evangelist to convert Plodders to more Useful People</p>
<p>Data Drill</p> 	<p>Due to their tendency to never be satisfied with the precision of any analysis, you should ensure they devote their skills to areas where data is more accurate and suits detailed analysis. Keep them away from areas of uncertainty.</p>
<p>Jobsworth</p> 	<p>Exploit their ability to identify areas where standards and processes are ambiguous or do not match current business needs. Encourage them to be more tolerant of these issues once they have alerted managers to their presence, you just have to make sure you resolve them in a realistic timescale!</p>
<p>Data Beaver</p> 	<p>Channel the boundless energy of Data Beavers by providing clearer guidelines on areas where they can improve data. Monitor that the tasks have been done correctly. Provide lots of recognition for their efforts</p>
<p>Data Agnostic</p> 	<p>The Data Agnostic always questions the need for change, anticipate their questions to develop a communication approach that is more widely usable</p>

Data behaviour	Suggested strategies for change
<p>Data SEP</p> 	<p>The SEP tends to be very resistant to change. Unless they have specific skills and experience that you cannot acquire elsewhere, consider transferring them to other business areas.</p>
<p>Plodder</p> 	<p>Pair Plodders up with a Useful Person who can show them the easy ways to get tasks completed. Also ensure that lots of recognition is provided for improvements in approach and attitude.</p>
<p>Data Anarchist</p> 	<p>Allow them to explore new areas by engaging them on work to solve new business problems. Get them as busy as you can so that they will be happier to pass their home created spreadsheets and databases to others to incorporate in the main corporate systems.</p>
<p>Data Squirrel</p> 	<p>Encourage them to pass their hoard of data and information to others for sharing more widely. Provide lots of praise for how diligent they have been to keep all this information for the company good etc.</p>
<p>Not Bovered</p> 	<p>They will need reminding about data security procedures and the requirements of the Data Protection Act. Making sure they are aware of the potential personal liabilities they are exposing themselves to will also tend to help.</p>
<p>Data Hedgehog</p> 	<p>The Data Hedgehog will put up their defences if ever they feel threatened – gently coax them to explain what they do and how they would like to be helped. Offer support and reassurance.</p>
<p>Whinger</p> 	<p>Listen to the Whinger and try to better understand their concerns and how, or whether, they can be addressed. This will take time and effort, but once the concerns of a Whinger have been broken down to their root causes, you have a better chance of improving their behaviours.</p>
<p>Data Ostrich</p> 	<p>Provide suitable technical support to allow them to easily add evidence based on data to their deep technical knowledge. If they are receptive, provide training and mentoring to allow them to understand and use decision support tools for themselves.</p>

Good luck in identifying all the different data behaviours in your organisation and changing them into the data behaviours you require.

About Data and Process Advantage

Data and Process Advantage (DPA) are experts in helping organisations delivering greater benefits from their data, systems and processes. DPA provide independent pragmatic advice in order to develop positive, long term client relationships. We have extensive experience across a number of sectors, particularly asset intensive sectors including utilities and transportation. We are a member of Intelligent Thinking, an alliance of specialist consultancies with complementary skill sets.



Julian Schwarzenbach is a Director of Data and Process Advantage Limited and has over 20 years experience in information management in a variety of industries, particularly utilities and transport. Roles have included the management and development of asset management systems in utilities, management of system enhancement projects, development of asset data provision processes, assessment of the effectiveness of asset data provision processes, requirements specification for new asset information systems.

Julian is Chair of the BCS Data Management Specialist Group and presents regularly on the subject of information management. He is leader of a project run by the Institute of Asset Management to document good practice approaches to asset information quality.

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