

10 Reasons Big Data Is Important Today

Clarke Patterson

Sr. Director, Product Marketing



Big data. The term often referred to as being overused, overhyped, and vendor driven is here to stay whether we like it or not. Before you roll your eyes and seek out something different to read, consider this: term aside, we live in a unique time. A time when data—big or small—is forcing us to rethink everything, challenge the status quo, and solve problems we previously thought unsolvable. So while the term may be overused, it's hard to deny that big data is changing the world as we know it. Here are a few areas I find particularly interesting:

1. Lowering business risks

A recent PWC report suggests that cybersecurity threats are growing at unprecedented rates. In 2015, the number of incidents was up 38%, with intellectual property particularly under attack. Big data has a huge role to play in stemming this troubling trend. But it's not just cyber where big data can help. Organizations face additional threats that put their business at risk. Rising regulatory and compliance pressures can stop a business in its tracks. Fortunately, big data can help.

2. Driving customer insights

Customer 360. Arguably one of the oldest data management initiatives in the books. For what seems like an eternity, we've been chasing the proverbial "master view" of our customers, so as to offer them the best experience or most relevant products. Don't get me wrong, all of this is very important. Prior to big data, however, one key piece has been missing: context. Context in knowing not only who people are, but what they are doing, right there in the moment. You simply must know what forces surround them at any given time so you don't have to guess what they might do next.

3. Improving product & services efficiency

Perhaps some of the more interesting industry segments to watch these days is manufacturing, automotive, and logistics. Powered by the Internet of Things (IoT), products and services are being offered like never before. With so much machine generated data at their disposal, organizations in these segments have a unique perspective on their business that they didn't have previously. The end result is streamlined product development processes, improved quality, and reduced overall costs.

4. Data architecture modernization

Who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks? In a lot of ways, the data problems being solved in business today aren't really new. In fact, the first three items on the list have been stalwart concerns in business for as long as anyone can remember. What has changed however is HOW we're approaching a solution for these problems. Modern data architectures allow an organization to leverage all data, structured or unstructured, to do transformative things.

5. Made the irrelevant relevant

There's an interesting trend happening in business today. Thanks to a data first mentality, old companies are reinventing themselves. Surely we've all see the recent GE commercials where the character Owen, surprised by his friends in honor of his new job as a developer, informs his friends that his job is in fact at GE. "What?!!!" one friend responds, noticeably confused by this news. Owen then explains how he'll be making machines better to improve planes, trains, and hospitals. GE has a big focus on big data and, as such, has a whole new cool factor. But they aren't alone. Retailers, car manufacturers, and utility providers are doing it too. This puts a whole new twist on job prospects for our younger generations. You can have a cool job even if it's not at Google, Facebook, or Apple—all thanks to big data.

6. Turning various industries upside down

As should be obvious from #5, industry is in a state of transition. Notable examples include transportation, where Uber and Lyft are forcing traditional players to figure out what to do; and automotive where, if your vehicles aren't data centric, you're in a lot of trouble. Across virtually every industry, there's some sort of shift going on. Heck, even the technology industry is seeing the shift—see #8 below.

7. Fostering development of a whole new set of skills

Today, thanks to big data, there's a whole new group of tech possibilities to get excited about. Working with Hadoop alone, there are many different things to learn, depending on what you're trying to do. And it's not only enterprise looking to build these skills. Leading universities are building Hadoop into their curriculum, developing the big data workforce of the future.

8. Open source—a movement just waiting to happen

Open source is nothing new. By some accounts, the term was first coined in 1998 and there have been some very meaningful tech sectors that have had a lot of success from it (Linux anyone?). But until now, the value of open source seems to have been marginalized to just cost savings. In the era of big data, open source is a key decision criteria not only due to cost, but also due to the collaboration and pace of innovation that it fosters. A huge cross section of the big data space is turning to open source as a way to do business. Open source is finally hip, cool, and something that is leaving non-participating vendors on the outside looking in.

9. Everyone becomes an analyst

There's an interesting trend happening within the workplace: everyone is increasingly inquisitive. Give one person a little bit of data, and suddenly all their peers want to know how they can see the same so as to do their own analysis. Every business function from finance to marketing to product is now using data on a daily basis. And it's not just people we previously thought of as "analysts" but virtually everyone that's looking to dig into data. If you're not, your peers likely are and, as such, are standing out in their role. Tooling is helping here greatly. No longer are you required to use über-technical tools to do data analysis. There are loads of analytics tools available today, designed for a wide range of technical abilities, so everyone can get in the game.

10. The hope for what's possible

Beyond all the tech excitement, perhaps most profound is the impact that big data is having on the world as we know it. Sure, we can talk about recommendation engines and the countless examples of how big data has helped with better ad placement, but how exciting is that, really? Take a look around and you'll see all sorts of amazing things being made possible by big data. Patient outcomes are improving, cities are getting smarter, and threats are being thwarted like never before.

We live in interesting times. With data so abundantly cheap and accessible, it's hard to say what will happen next. What we do know, however, is we're starting to make the impossible possible and the implications are profound. Who knows where the next 10 years will take us?



About Cloudera

Cloudera delivers the modern platform for data management and analytics. The world's leading organizations trust Cloudera to help solve their most challenging business problems with Cloudera Enterprise, the fastest, easiest, and most secure data platform built on Apache Hadoop. Our customers can efficiently capture, store, process, and analyze vast amounts of data, empowering them to use advanced analytics to drive business decisions quickly, flexibly, and at lower cost than has been possible before. To ensure our customers are successful, we offer comprehensive support, training, and professional services. Learn more at cloudera.com.

cloudera.com

1-888-789-1488 or 1-650-362-0488

Cloudera, Inc. 1001 Page Mill Road, Palo Alto, CA 94304, USA

© 2016 Cloudera, Inc. All rights reserved. Cloudera and the Cloudera logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Cloudera Inc. in the USA and other countries. All other trademarks are the property of their respective companies. Information is subject to change without notice.