



DataMOT

GDPR Placing Data Professionals at the Forefront of Commercial Decision-Making

Keeping Data Clean is at the Core of Compliance and Competitiveness

If GDPR has done one thing, it has brought potential and pitfalls of data to the fore, giving a much stronger voice to those within the organisation responsible for data, to change the mindset about how it can not only aid the business to operate lawfully, but also improve commercial decision-making and improve engagement with customers.

A wise marketing professional once said: "Data ages like fish not wine... it gets worse as it gets older, not better". In fact, it has been widely accepted for many years that data decay occurs at rates between 2% and 5% annually (depending on the type of data you have). Now, given the dramatic rise in the number of customer interaction touchpoints, driven by digital, I suspect today this figure is much higher and will continue this upward trajectory. Of course, this

isn't news to any data professional and neither is the concept of the data cleanse, but GDPR is putting new focus and impetus on marketers to discipline themselves to do something to stop the rot.

Data quality doesn't have a deadline

It is not uncommon for organisations to have their data annually Spring-cleaned. But the reality of this approach is that you can only be sure your database is up-to-date one day of the year. And right now businesses of all shapes and sizes want to be sure their data is in perfect condition following the implementation of GDPR on the 25th May 2018. It was important to strive to meet the deadline, but it isn't the same as the Millennium Bug (for those of you old enough to remember it!) when on 1st January 2000

everyone breathed a sigh of relief that their IT systems had not collapsed.

GDPR is more about a way of life rather than a one-time event, as Article 5 of the regulation specifies: that data must be accurate and, where necessary, kept up-to-date. So, keeping data clean needs to become a habit and not a chore factored in as once a year spend.

Give your data a health-check

The truth is that GDPR compliance really isn't the main reason for having a clean and healthy database. You don't aim to go to the gym three times a week and eat five fruits and veg every day just because of government guidelines, you do it because you see benefits in how you look and feel. The same is true of data – follow the rules and keep your data fit for purpose

- and the rewards will follow - keeping you better connected with customers, ensuring marketing expenditure isn't wasted on unnecessary fulfilment costs, safeguarding brand reputation from sending ill-timed, and inappropriate communications and of course regulatory compliance.

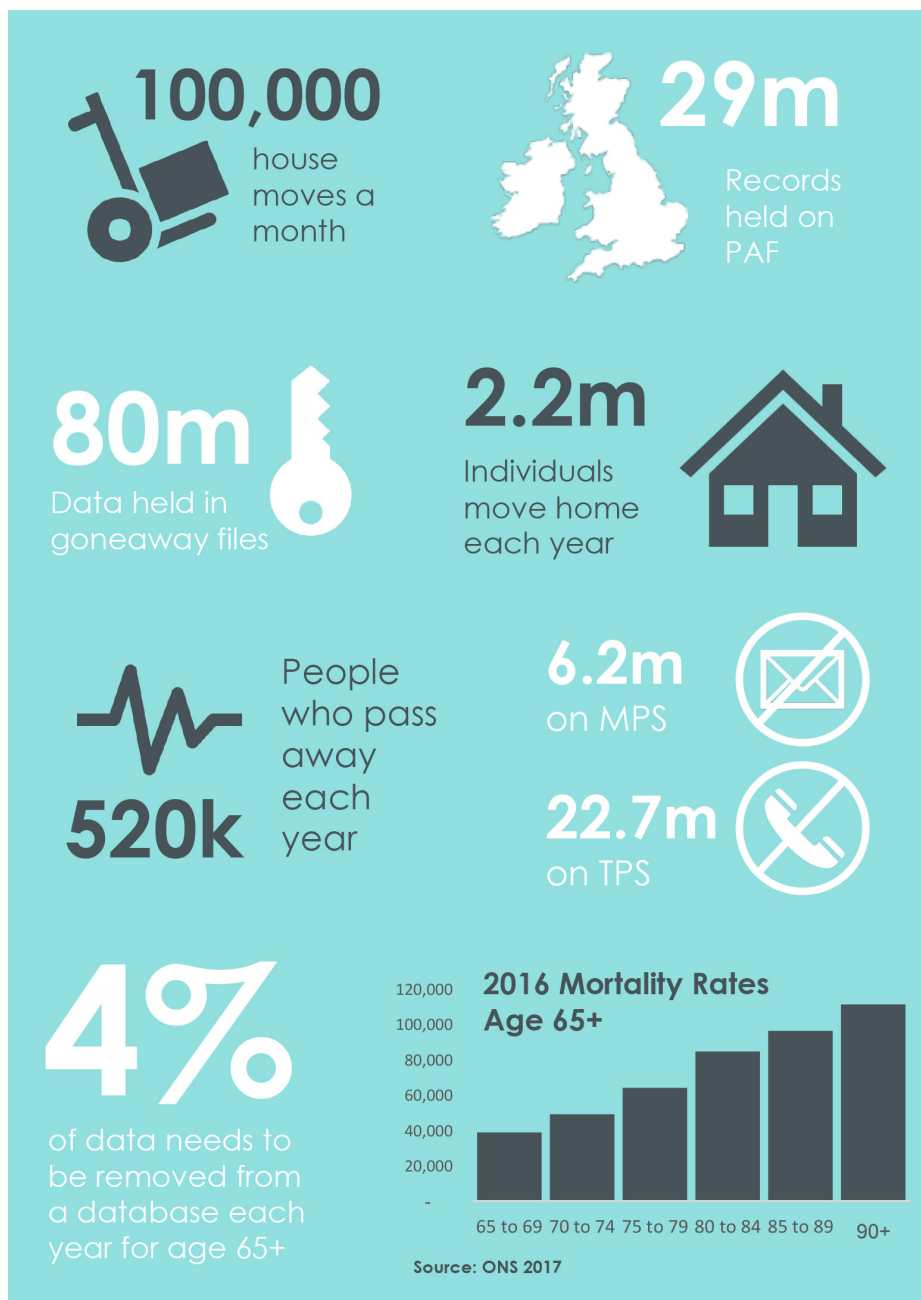
So, where do you begin if regular data cleansing isn't something you regularly do?

To continue the health and wellbeing analogy, you need get a baseline of your overall fitness to help set priorities and goals, and in the data world that means an audit. Such an audit isn't only about understanding how 'clean' your database is, it is about challenging what you do today, how you should do it tomorrow and how to be prepared. It is at this early stage that it is wise to enlist the knowledge and expertise of a data specialist, such as DBS Data. Doing so can save huge amounts of time and money.

What should a data audit look like?

- What data do we keep within the business? Are we permitted to keep it?
- Where is it stored? Is it secure?
- Who has access to the data?
- Do we need it? (Many organisations have a large volume of lapsed customers and if no legitimate interest can be demonstrated this could be a breach of GDPR)
- How do we intend to use the data?
- How are we going to keep it cleaned regularly?
- How are we going to keep data in compliance with ongoing regulation?
- How is the database structured and does it lend itself to a potential influx of subject access requests?

The next step is to get the database thoroughly cleansed and suppressed, which to the uninitiated means running the data against files including PAF, TPS, MPS, in addition to industry deceased and goneaway files, as well as basics such as name and address validation. Don't worry, only the data



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Greg Thaler

specialists conducting your cleanse need know what all these acronyms mean! Put simply these identify people that have moved home, those that have passed away, people that do not wish to be contacted via telephone and many more criteria. This is vital if you are going to safeguard against data decay given that each year there are 2.2 million home moves and 502 thousand pass away on average each year.

► Cleansing is as important for B2B as it is for B2C

If you are a B2B organisation there are also files that will allow businesses that have ceased trading to be removed from the database, as well as identifying those that have moved location and tracking decision-makers that have moved. A project recently completed with TradePoint (the trade only arm of B&Q) highlights how data cleansing is equally important for B2C and B2P organisations

The company had two-million members address records which were thoroughly cleansed and re-formatted to PAF standards. As a direct result, its email open rates are 10% higher than the industry average and click-through rates to the website increased by 3%. It was also able to save money by minimising mailing wastage. Lisa Wise is the Marketing Manager at TradePoint and she commented that: "Since we started working with DBS we have cleansed, verified and enhanced our customer data allowing us to talk to our customers about the things they care about. The results have been fantastic, and we are in a strong position to meet GDPR legislation going forward."

The future is only going to be data

If you think that reliance on data is high now, you only need to look at the conversations being had regarding the potential applications of artificial intelligence and machine learning to see that this is only going to increase. In fact, right-now there is a swell of activity in the UK retail sector introducing AI applications in areas such as personalisation across digital channels. These applications will succeed or fail, depending on the quality of data they have to work with. Your organisation may not be taking such a step now but having a data quality programme in place will mean it is ready if and when the time comes.

GDPR has focused the collective minds of organisations on data and those that may have previously



expressed little or no interest in marketing data are now taking a keen interest in how it is managed and used. But this is to be embraced as an opportunity to take a seat at the top table of corporate decision-making.

The data you hold and how it is used should never place a company at risk, it should be a prized asset that delivers demonstrable value time and time again.

DataMOT Cleanse Solutions

DataMOT Cleanse solutions from DBS Data give you peace of mind that your data is compliant and optimised for campaigns. We offer four different packages ranging from Introduction, Light Touch, Comprehensive and Enterprise to meet your specific business needs. Talk to us today about getting the right level of data cleanse process into your business.

About DBS Data

We are passionate about data... and we have been since 1994.

With a combined data expertise of more than 150 years we have a culture that encourages us to think outside the box and deliver creative, compliant marketing data solutions that really make a difference.

Our vision is simple... to be the most trusted source of compliant innovative data solutions.