

Geospatial Commission announce location data ethics project

The Geospatial Commission, with support from UK Research and Innovation's [Sciencewise](#) programme, has launched a public dialogue to better understand views from members of the public about the use of location data.

When location data is linked with other data about people and the world we live in, we can gain important insights and create new services that greatly improve how we live, work and travel. With these new data applications and opportunities, there are emerging privacy and ethical considerations. So that we can continue to benefit from widespread use of location data, it is important that data is used in a way that mitigates concerns and retains public confidence.

Partnering with public dialogue and data specialists Sciencewise, [Traverse](#) and the [Ada Lovelace Institute](#), the new project will open a conversation with members of the public to gather evidence on public perceptions about location data use. An Oversight Group will provide expert support and quality assurance from a diversity of views. Findings will help deliver the [UK Geospatial Strategy](#).

Minister of State for the Cabinet Office, Lord True CBE said:

The rapid advancement and increasing use of location data and technologies present great opportunities for the UK to realise significant economic, social and environmental value accompany the rapid advancement and increasing use of location data and technologies. Through developing a dialogue to explore public views about location data, the Geospatial Commission has an important role in supporting the government to remain proactive in maintaining public confidence in how location data is accessed and used.

Tom Saunders, Head of Public Engagement at UK Research and Innovation, added:

I'm very pleased that Sciencewise is supporting the Geospatial Commission in this nationally important project on the ethics of location data use, and look forward to finding out what members of the public think about the opportunities and issues involved.

This public dialogue is part of a programme of work to promote and safeguard the use of location data, which is the first mission of the UK's Geospatial Strategy launched last year. Our aim is to develop guidance on how to unlock value from sensitive location data while mitigating ethical and privacy risks.

About Public Dialogue

Public dialogue is an approach to involving citizens in decision making. Dialogues bring together a diverse mix of citizens with a range of views and values, and relevant policy makers and experts, to discuss, reflect and come to conclusions on complex issues. For more information see [ScienceWise FAQs](#). Traverse will recruit members of the public later this year for the workshops.

Members of the Oversight Group

John Pullinger (Chair) and previously the UK's National Statistician

Andy Gregory, Home Office

Ben Lyons, Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation

Charles Kennelly, Esri

Chris Wroe, Telefonica (02)

David Leslie, Alan Turing Institute

Ellis Parry, Information Commissioner's Office

Jagdev Singh Virdee, Independent Consultant

Jeni Tennison, Open Data Institute

Josh Berle, Mastercard

Marcus Grazette, Privitar

Mick Ridley, Global

Phillipa Sharma, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

Professor Shannon Vallor, Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI), University of Edinburgh

Professor Yves-Alexandre de Montjoye, Imperial College London

Renate Sampson, Which?

Simon Whitworth, UK Statistics Authority

Sue Bateman, Government Digital Service

Toby Wicks, UNICEF