

>> Welcome and thank you for joining us for today's Digital Impact Virtual Roundtable on the Good Data Collaboratives, Defining Responsible Data for Non-Profits. I'm Lucy Bernholz, Director of the Digital Civil Society Lab at the Stanford Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society. These virtual roundtables are community-generated series of conversations about issues related to digital data and civil society. The conversations are part of the larger constellation of activities that we at Digital Impact and the Digital Civil Society Lab undertake to weave together various communities around the globe. These communities include the International Network of our Digital Impact Grantee awardees, the man Fellow scholars, practitioners, and leaders we've met and learned from on the Digital Impact World Tour, and various and sundry other members of the Digital Impact community. We extend a warm welcome to all of our colleagues and friends in these and other places, and we invite you to learn more about the different initiatives and opportunities available through Digital Impact, the Digital Civil Society Lab, and Stanford PACS. Today we're talking about responsible data, what it means, how to use it, and how mission-driven organizations can benefit from being more vigilant about the data that they collect and share. Recent exploration of responsible data practice in the nonprofit sector shows a deep disconnect between two opposing visions of data in social change work. One, right space and respectful of the individual ownership of data. And the other, data-centric and focused on transactional exchanges of development gains in return for data access and monetization. These rapidly polarizing approaches to responsible data are creating inconsistencies across platforms and project that make it really difficult for data subjects, also known as people, to make informed decisions about who gets their data and how it's going to be managed. Findings from the consultation suggest that even organizations that recognize the need to improve their compliance with responsible data practices struggle to do so. Responsible data is such a new concept that it lacks organizational compliance mechanisms and even broad understanding. This raises some important questions about power, the role of data and ethics in the tech for social good space. The consultation that informs this conversation was conducted by the Good Data Collaborative which was funded by a 2016 Digital Impact Grant. This was a joint project with Simlab, the Center for Democracy and Technology, the Future Privacy Forum, and the Engine Room. And it looked at the resources available to help social change organizations manage their data more responsibly. Over the next hour we'll talk to a group of experts who are developing tools and advanced think policies designed to help nonprofits overcome the complexity of implementing responsible data practices. Before we get started, let's go over a few housekeeping details. Everyone but the panelists – the microphones are muted for the length of the discussion. We do want to hear from you and we're delighted that some of you have already sent in some questions ahead of time. We want you to participate and be part of the conversation so please use the Question function on your control panel to chime in, submit your questions, and I'll pass those on to the panelists and everyone on the call. We'll try to cover as many of your questions as we can, so don't hesitate to send them in early and we'll weave them into the conversation

as soon as we can. This conversation is recorded and gets shared out on the Digital Impact Podcast on iTunes and on the website Digitalimpact.org. And there you'll also find a bunch of other resources for using digital resources safely, ethically, and effectively in the social sector. We're always planning more Virtual Roundtables, so stay connected with us on social media and subscribe to the mailing list for updates. And remember, these conversations are driven by and for the community, so if you've got a topic you'd like us to discuss, please let us know by emailing us at hello@digitalimpact.org. So, let's get started. Let me introduce our panelists. We joined by Kelly Church who is a Community Engagement and Technology Consultant and currently a Master's student at the Fletcher School. Hi, Kelly, thanks for joining us. Natasha Duarte is Policy Analyst at the Center for Democracy and Technology. Hi, Natasha.

>> Hi. Thank you.

>> And Zara Rahman leads the Research Engagement and Communities Team at the Engine Room. Hey, Zara.

>> Uh-huh.

>> Thanks to each of you for joining us. So, let's frame up this conversation. The primary goal of digital impact is to advance the safe, ethical, and effective use of digital resources for public benefit in civil society. Today we're talking about sort of the dark side of data practice in the sector and how nonprofits are working together to create a more human-centric approach to data management. Well, some institutional donors demonstrate a vested interest in upholding responsible data practice. The data-centric vision of tech for social change appears also to be well-represented among many other donors who have a lot of spending power but a slightly lighter emphasis on evidence-based granting and swift decision-making. These powerful organizations influence practice well beyond their grantees. The members of today's panel are here to help balance the view between data as a good in and of itself, and in a more – and a more context-specific and grounded look at the potential risks and benefits from engaging in data-driven work. Perhaps most importantly, they'll help us understand how nonprofits of all sizes can implement responsible data practices before it's too late. Let's get started. Zara, I'm going to start with you. The Engine Room has responsible data practices hardwired into its work and supports its partners to do the same. There's evidence all around us that data and technology are moving the needle on social issues and helping us improve lives, so what exactly is responsible data and why do we need it?

>> It's a good question. And, yeah, thank you for having me and for the nice introduction [inaudible]. And, yeah, I guess to me responsibility is really a concept that kind of outlines our collected duty to think about the umbrella of the ethical, legal, social, and privacy [inaudible] come from using data [inaudible] in different ways in advocacy and social change. So I think it's kind of helpful to think about the origin, so like a few years ago the Engine Room came together with [inaudible] partners to think about – to really recognize

and to acknowledge that there was this new kind of, as you say, basic using data and technology in this space. And a lot of people were worried that we weren't being as thoughtful as we could be around the ethical – like there's grey areas where you're not really sure what's happening, where you maybe want to try a thing, but you're not sure what the consequences are, and so responsibility to any encompasses a variety of issues which are sometimes [inaudible] separately such as, you know, [inaudible] privacy protection, ethical challenges. And I think using the responsible data framework a way of thinking of it really acknowledges that in order for any of them to be truly addressed, they need to be considered together. And as to the second part of your question, why do you need responsible data, you mentioned that there's lots of examples of how tech and data are helping to improve lives. Well, it's a bit potentially but cynical, but I think there's also a lot of evidence of how it's doing exactly the opposite in many ways. And sometimes that's intentional malicious active, but sometimes it's also through unintended consequences of well-intended actions. So a couple of years ago at the Engine Room we collected a series of what we call responsible data reflection stories of how data use in civil society had had unintended consequences. Some of these were negative. Some of them were just kind of surprising and required litigation strategies. And it's really cases like that which I think are really surprisingly common across the sector from yeah, from all areas that we need responsible data just to help people think through proactively what the unintended consequences of their actions are.

>> Right. Thanks, Zara. You really hit on something that I hear often from people which is a lot of organizations are trying to help vulnerable people and unless they can really manage their data well, they may be actually making those vulnerable people more vulnerable in new and different ways rather than actually helping them. Kelly, the Simlab Consultation , published late last year uncovered what Laura Walker McDonald called, quote, “a brewing culture clash between datacentric and right spaced approaches to technology and social change project”, end quote. Social change is a pretty crowded playing field. Many organizations struggle with how to collect data and use it effectively. In the rush to demonstrate the impact of what they do, have social change organizations missed an important step? And how can we do a better job of communicating the risks of collecting and reporting data?

>> Thanks, Lucy. Yeah, I mean, from our, from our consultations we're finding that it's really all being done too quickly. It's not just about reporting but it's about defaulting to even asking. So there's very little data minimization happening and people are just going out asking kind of a whole list of questions that they think potentially in the future could be useful. And that just puts beneficiaries or end-users really at risk. So, you know, I think it's really about having a plan before you start even thinking about collecting data, thinking through things like where it will be kept, how long you'll keep it for, who will be responsible for deleting it? And then, secondly, it's also about respecting people's time, so if you're looking at a community that's in an area where there's a lot of development going on, they may have been asked this question

many times before, and it's possible that you can get this information elsewhere. So, yeah, I mean, there's that. And then as far as like when we start to get two solutions there's no quick fix. And that was really the summary of our consultations that the organizations we spoke with are really on quite a wide spectrum. So there's some that are actually doing some harm or really have the potential to do harm very easily. And then there's others that are more cognizant about where they are with responsible data but still aren't all the way there. So we think that it's really about starting a conversation, having responsible data be a conversation, be something that people can express openly their questions, their concerns, things they don't understand. And then also, you know, really getting responsible data outside of upper management's heads and into field-level staff because at the end of the day it's the field-level staff that are better going to be interfacing with the most vulnerable populations and they're the ones that will probably have the most vulnerable data at risk of interception or whatever else it might be. And then I think also something interesting that came out of our consultations was that the idea that data is really a part of an ecosystem now, so there's very few organizations who collect the data, maintain the data, and are the only ones to ever see it. Oftentimes, you know, we're not working with consultants. We're working with service-provider platforms, donors. So starting to think through, well, you know, this is my organization's responsible data kind of policies, but what about data [inaudible] service providers? So making sure that that's all incorporated into the strategy as well. And, yeah, it's going to take –

>> Great. I mean you hit on a really – yeah. Well, there's a lot there. But you hit on a really interesting kind of – almost a cultural assumption that I think so many people have become habituated to, which is the assumption that more data and hold it forever is the approach. At least that's how the companies we interact with all the time treat us. And what you're pointing to is the need that at base fit to be much more thoughtful about what data you collect and how long you hold on with – if at all. So, Natasha, this seems to be something that the Center for Democracy and Technology has thought long and hard about. CDT champions digital civil liberties in an effort to drive policy outcomes that keep the Internet open, innovative, and free. And we can't talk about collecting digital data without also considering privacy and security, especially since cyber attacks and data breaches seem to be increasing at a record pace. So what measures should organizations be taking to limit their data collection and protect personal information from manipulation by outside interests?

>> Yeah. So, really quickly first, I wanted to also address a point that all three of you have made really well already, which is that responsible data and data protection is really a first-order requirement for serving vulnerable communities. And I wanted to point to an ongoing research project that originally Eubanks and others are doing right now are called "Our Data Bodies," which I think really puts this all into perspective, because we are talking about people. So what they're doing is actually going out into communities in different cities

and talking to people who are members of vulnerable communities about what happens to their data and how they feel about it. And the responses that they're getting back show that people really are concerned about how the collection and use of their data might be limiting their options and opportunities. So in order to effectively serve vulnerable communities, I just want to echo what you all have said, that responsible data really needs to be a first order priority and not sort of a secondary thing that you sort of tack on to the end of your mission. So answer the question of what organizations can do. The first step is really to take inventory of what you are collecting and establish a policy that prioritizes data minimization, meaning that you are really limiting your data collection to what you really need to carry out your mission. And often nonprofit organizations are relying on volunteers and interns and others to help carry out your mission, so an important aspect of coming up with this policy, and the first thing is making sure that your volunteers and interns also are subject to the same training and the same written agreements and policies as your formal employees. A policy should also involve not just limiting collection, but also a plan for when you're going to get rid of information. So CDC has a white paper on data deletion and, you know, I would encourage people to look at that for ideas on establishing a policy for how long you're going to keep information when it becomes no longer useful or relevant, you know, getting rid of it or making sure that it's not accessible. You also want to limit who in the organization has access to sensitive data and regularly, you know, keep a log and audit who is accessing sensitive data and why. And then often organizations are relying on third-party services for, you know, communications, things as simple as email for creating documents and other parts of their workflows, and so one thing you can do that's really simple is to compare those services for the security, promises, and guarantees that they're making, and try to make the best choice about, you know, who's offering encryption and two-factor authentication. There's actually a website that shows which services like banking and communication services actually offer two-factor authentication. Unfortunately, I can't remember the URL right now, but I can circulate it later if that would be helpful for folks. So those are just a couple of things that nonprofits can do to sort of start, you know, toward a more responsible data policy.

>> Great. Thanks, Natasha. And I should just point out here that as our panelists or people in the audience suggest URLs and resources we will be capturing those and we'll flow them into the transcript that will be available at the end of the conversation. So thanks for those resources. I also just want to pick up, Natasha, on something you said in thinking about volunteers. One of the sort of leakiest places I've seen when I talk to nonprofit organizations and NGOs is we forget that our Board Members are volunteers, and we create a whole lot of careful in-house, kind of paid staff and even possibly the programmatic volunteer trainings and – you know, sort of practices and principles. But then we go sending off, you know, highly sensitive financial documents and programmatic evaluations and all kinds of other access to Board Members who are logging in from who knows where using who knows what of their own devices. And so

really kind of thinking of that entire organizational loop as the set of people who need to be both aware of, responsible for, and continuously trained about these practices is really an important insight. So, thanks for that.

>> Zara, back to you. One of the real tensions that nonprofits feel, and NGOs, is that in this age of digital data and our desire to be using our resources well, there's a lot of pressure to use data to prove your impact and guide your decisions. I mean, that's actually probably the two things that the resource is best for, both of which are easier said than done. And how does a – so how does a small nonprofit organization with data that it doesn't know what to do about, go about practicing responsible data. On the one hand it wants to be able to learn what it's doing well, demonstrate its impact, but also not make vulnerable people more vulnerable. Do you start from scratch? How does this intersect with organizational culture questions? Where do you go first?

>> Well, it's a great question. And I totally agree that the – yeah, there is a lot of pressure on organizations nowadays. I think, to me, like the [inaudible], as you say, is kind of helping people to understand that they, too, that's made up of people. So it's not kind of an objective, technical, factual thing, but it's a, you know, a very – it's a representation of a subjective view of reality. There's like data that's not collected and it should have been. There's data that's manipulated in certain ways to show a particular version of events. There's analyses that make assumptions that might be incorrect or might reflect certain [inaudible]. Yeah, there's many other ways that they [inaudible] manipulated the [inaudible] basically any story. Almost kind of [inaudible] when organizations say that they're looking to make data driven decisions if that's not taking into account also kind of what an ethnographer friend [inaudible] with thick data, so it's kind of a combination of deep ethnographic data alongside kind of fake data or [inaudible] data. And so all that to say, I think really kind of starting to take a responsible data approach would just mean recognizing that the rights of the people who are reflected in the data that you're working with and really trying to think best to respect those rights because there's really no – it's all very contextual. It depends who you are and who you're working with, what those power dynamics are like. And one thing that I think we often [inaudible] is that many of the – at least at the Engine Room many of the civil society organizations that we work with already have a culture which is deeply critical about power relationships and how power affects decision-making and social change. And so I think almost the easiest way of starting things is by kind of turning that critical lens, which is so often so crucial to advocacy and activism, towards the data that they're using on a [inaudible] is data that they have. So that might mean being kind of skeptical about what the data says just as you might be skeptical of what a politician says. So there's always – there's usually kind of elements within an organization's culture that you can bring out. I think recognizing the cultural piece to this and thinking of it not as a kind of a series of technical specifications to follow is really important and valuable.

>> And you make a really important point which Kelly and Natasha have also made, but just to reemphasize which is basically that the kind of digital data that we're talking out is really about people. At the beginning, end, and middle, it's about people. I think we'll probably come back to some of the organizational culture questions. We do have a question coming in from the audience which I'll just bring up right here because I was expecting to see this. And sure enough we saw it right away, which has to do with the GDPR, the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation for those of you not familiar with the acronym. GDPR which is how I'll refer to it from now on. And this I think is an interesting phenomenon because it's a law, it's a new regulation going into effect in the EU in May of this year. Lots of global impact for lots of reasons. But let me just ask the question as it's asked here. It's a two-part question and I'll put it to anyone who wants to jump in. Should the benefits of GDPR for responsible data be better communicated? That's the first part. So that assumes that people actually have some idea of what's in the GDPR. But we need to be more aware of it. And then there's a question about whether or not the nonprofit sector or civil society [inaudible] large actually be promoting a version of GDPR beyond the EU that in fact recognizes, I guess this part of the question recognizes that the GDPR itself, the way it brings a right-spaced framework about data ownership and protection to the law in the EU, should the nonprofit sector be behind something like that on a more global scale? So I'll just put that question to each of you if you want to take a crack at it. It takes us out of what Zara and others were talking about in terms of the mission purpose of respecting people's data rights to a compliance framework and an external set of pressures. Any thoughts on the GDPR?

>> I have some [inaudible] the others [inaudible].

>> Great. Get it.

>> Yeah, sure. So we actually – we had a community corps about [inaudible] not so long ago because we were already recognizing that, you know, and based in Germany, lots of – we work with partners that are in the EU as well. And it is that the – a really big deal. And I've been actually very surprised at how little attention I can see kind of [inaudible] to it. And [inaudible], I don't know. To me, the things that we're seeing this week around Cambridge Analytica and Facebook and things like that – I've seen kind of op-eds calling for things like the right to data portability which is one of the rights in the GDPR, or the right to [inaudible] which is also one of the rights in the GDPR. But lots of people don't seem to be mentioning it which is very funny to me. And what I mean – so the first part of that question should [inaudible] I think the relationship between the GDPR and the [inaudible] is pretty exciting to see that the GDPR does promote a very right place approach, so taking both, you have – if you're reflected in data you have certain rights. And the GDPR really lays out what those rights are. And – so that's, yeah, very, very cool. And so the second part, thinking beyond the EU or thinking more broadly, to us, you know, for example, at the Engine Room we've been – and I've spoken to a few other organizations

who are also thinking a bit like this, as the GDPR not with the compliance issue but rather as a, you know, as a new set of practices to integrate into our culture like the way that we do things. So we're not doing it because we're [inaudible] you know compliance issues, really, like the – you know, obviously the financial penalties are very high. But the things that they suggested, the things that they regulate that you do are actually very helpful, you know. It's encouraging, it's encouraging not for the behaviors that we've been talking about here such as, you know, being intentional about when you're collecting data saying why you're collecting it and how long you're going to keep it for and – like mandating when you're going to delete it. And I think that's a very helpful behavior to get in practical. So I don't need if we need to kind of [inaudible] anything separate up, but rather for other organizations in the other areas of the world just to take notice of what was mandated within the GDPR. I think that would be very helpful.

>> Great. Ellie –

>> [Inaudible] any thoughts on –

>> Go ahead.

>> Yeah, I think that is absolutely right, and in the U.S. we don't have a comprehensive rights-based data protection framework, and it's something that CDC has been advocating for for a long time. So I do think as the second question of, you know, whether nonprofits should support something more comprehensive and rent space outside of the EU, yeah, I think the sort of sector-specific way that data protection works in the U.S., that depends on, you know the Notice and Consent model that puts a lot of the burden on people to try to figure out from [inaudible] privacy policy is what's happening with their data and make sort of what I think is a false choice to consent or not consent to it since so many of these services, and particularly, you know, social services, are necessary. You know, it doesn't really work for people.

>> Yeah. And I would just – I was just going to chime in with while we were doing the consultations we were really noticing those that were and were not speaking about GDPR, and there was actually never a person not from the EU that mentioned it even though GDPR's certainly going to affect many of us. So that, I think, was just very interesting. And, for the most part, at least with those people that I spoke with, they would mention GDPR and kind of have it – it was this sort of black box of fear. So, really, a lot of misunderstanding, uncomfortable kind of feelings with it. And, you know, that was this summer, so maybe things have changed a bit since then, but I do think it would definitely be positive if the benefits were more clearly laid out I guess, or talked about.

>> Zara, you look like you might want to get in on that.

>> Yeah. I mean I was just going to say that we – I also have very like feelings of not knowing at all what this very, very detailed piece of regulation would mean. And over the past few weeks – I mean, we started with this community

[inaudible] precisely for that reason that we had lots of questions and it was kind of hard to know what everything meant. And one of the really nice things that came out of this community program was really the, you know, says like some clear steps that you can take. And at the Engine Room as we're moving toward kind of compliance, I guess, or kind of instigating more of these processes in our own work, we're also planning to kind of document who we're doing – what we're doing and why we're doing it, and in a way that we hope will be helpful to others who are eventually going through that same thing as what does all this legislation mean because it is [inaudible] it is very detailed and – yeah. I think it's – yeah, we need the most detailed [inaudible] protection regulation in the world.

>> Great. And knowing the work of the Engine Room and the Responsible Data Forum, I'll ask you. But I assume the answer is yes, but you'll be sharing out those materials as you develop them.

>> Yeah. That's part of the plan. So we already see this as an option for us to kind of learn while doing and then share what we're doing, because some of it is just kind of understanding what it means for our work – developing templates, developing things that other team – you know, other [inaudible] around the world can do. Nothing that even, you know, I have colleagues who are based in [inaudible] in Africa who aren't really that affected by the GDPR, but the idea of kind of – the intention of about what we collect and how we use [inaudible] is never, never a bad thing. So, yeah, we'll be [inaudible] about as we go.

>> Great. So that's a resource. I'm just linking this to another question that's come in, which is actually a request for resources – contracts, data-sharing, agreements, best practices, frameworks, for nonprofits and public-sector companies who are, you know, really trying to implement responsible data practices maybe in response to the GDPR or maybe because they actually recognize the value of this for this sector and mission-driven organization. So I'll shout out the work that Zara just mentioned. We'll capture the URL and responsible data that IO, the digital impact that IO Toolkit also has these kinds of toolkits. I'm sorry, these kinds of templates. Although the thing they emphasize here and I think Responsible Data Forum does remarkable job of this on a global scale is the need to create and share these collaboratively, that there isn't a secret repository with all the answers, but, in fact, the community is really building these tools. And so these are both responsibledata.io and digitalimpact.io are community created and community shared, and encourage people to take a look. But also let everyone know what's needed, what's being built, where there are gaps, and where there are – there's duplication. Certainly, there seems to be a lot of opportunity here to – whether or not you're directly covered by the European Union General Data Protection Regulation, take advantage of it going into effect to raise awareness about digital data as a resource to be managed, and certainly bringing a right-spaced framework to that is a tremendous opportunity which I think might accelerate the kind of work Engine Room and CDT and Simlab and Future Privacy Forum have been trying to do in general. Let's go back, if I

can, to Kelly talking about the way organizations themselves work. You've developed a framework – or Simlab has developed a framework for understanding overall how to use technology and social change projects. And the question is, why should nonprofits test assumptions about how their constituents use technology. How do nonprofits actually sort of marry their approach to technology to their work in understanding the real values, vision, needs, and capacities of the people they're working with – an asset-based approach in other words. How does technology fit into that framing?

>> Yeah. So, yeah. [Inaudible] we've heard at the contracts analysis framework which really is a tool to help organizations and implementers to better understand the context in which they're working. Now – I mean, it's a useful step as an assessment because it allows you to really, as you said, question those assumptions. So I think oftentimes now with a lot of innovation funding and competitiveness in the nonprofit space there's this idea that we want to be – organizations want to be constantly testing the limits and so – and oftentimes that has to do with technology. So, I mean, at least for us at – the work that we've done in the past, the context analysis has been really helpful to say, okay, we'll, you know, this is the situation in which you're working. Do, you know, do people really have airtime that they can reliably – that they can reliably access? Do they have electricity? Do they, you know, do they actually have the phones that you are trying to build this platform on? So you know it's interesting because we do sometimes get pushback because people will – people really want to think that they know the context in which they're working. They want to think that they know it quite well. And they do, of course, in many ways. But when you start to ask these very kind of simple questions about access and use, you find that, especially when you're looking at vulnerable populations, it's just not – it doesn't match up with the grand kind of perfect scenario assumptions. So, I mean, I think that that's – that's definitely useful. And, you know, in a more positive light I guess it also – going through this type of process can allow you to identify nodes or linkages that you didn't – weren't able to see from the get-go without asking the questions, doing the assessments. And I – and then – I mean, I guess another kind of political dimension of this is that this is a – this type of assessment is something that takes time and takes money. And so when you go back to the question of – or, you know, the kind of [inaudible] where someone says, well, we already understand that our contacts. We just need to start implementing. You do, of course, have some push-back there, and it's like – we really see doing a contacts assessment, doing this kind of prework, as a way to make sure that what you're hoping to do is going to be as successfully as possible. So in the end I think it actually does save money and time. But it's still something that we're trying to convince people of [laughter].

>> Yeah, it's a really important connection, I think, between context analysis, assumptions about technology, assumptions about power. They're all really wrapped together in these questions. There's another side of this that we're starting to – I think there's a conversation in the U.S. that may be starting to catch up with conversations elsewhere in the world about this. And, Natasha,

I'll direct this to you first. But maybe the others have ideas as well, which is, when it comes to data compliance, especially since we've just brought up the GDPR, there's – in civil society in the social sector, there are a couple of major players here. There's the nonprofits themselves, there's the people trying to be benefitted, there's the donors to the nonprofits, there's the software and platform providers that people are using. Who's responsible in that mix for understanding, from a compliance perspective, the law? And do all those different players – is there a hierarchy of responsibility or how do they relate to each other? How do you even just navigate just that?

>> So everyone in the ecosystem from – are responsible data perspective, from the donors to the nonprofits to the any-for-profit-partners that they work with has a responsibility to make sure that the people being served by these nonprofits are protected. And as Zara mentioned, you know, organizations, nonprofit organizations tend to be mission-driven and have a culture of sort of ethics and protection built in often that can really be leveraged to encourage more responsible data practices. And so I think that presents an opportunity for donors, and particularly foundations, to encourage their beneficiaries to implement responsible data systems. And when we were looking at a lot of the resources out there, a lot of them focus narrowly on [inaudible] compliance and don't necessarily take advantage of the fact that these organizations are mission-driven and ethics-driven to really drive home why it's important to holistically protecting [inaudible]. In terms of other players, the third parties that non-profits partner with to deliver services obviously are responsible for legal compliance, but also, you know, nonprofits can and should hold the third parties responsible [inaudible] if they're complying with the nonprofit organizations' data ethics and responsible data practices. So, you know, they can do that through contracts, shopping for providers based on how willing they are to comply with that, especially when it comes to, you know, access control, who's allowed to access that data, you know, how that data is used by the partner, if at all. So nonprofits, you know, have some leverage there that ideally they can use. And then, obviously, foundations do as well.

>> Interesting. So you're really – I hear that as pointing to the – part of the value of the responsible data framework, separate from a compliance framework, is the ability, the potential ability – the possibility, let me put it that way, to build an ecosystem, negotiate an ecosystem where protecting the rights of the people represented in the data is a shared responsibility as opposed to the language I hear often in the compliance structure which is really about, you know, covering your backside in terms of not being the one to cause the problem and a much more antagonistic set of dynamics between all these different players. I think that –

>> Yeah.

>> Go ahead.

>> I just want to add, you know, there's a lot that's still sort of unsettled

about who is responsible when, for example, there's a breach. You know, as congress periodically revisits the idea of having federal data breach legislation, the question is still coming up of, you know, who in the chain that has had access to the data is really responsible for this breach? And those are, you know, complex legal questions, but exactly as you said, like think about this from a responsible data framework can sort of help us break out of that covering out backsides mentality and really focus on everyone's responsibility for making sure that vulnerable communities especially are protected, and that the nonprofits and social services that we rely on to serve them re able to do so without worrying about, you know, the interests of the partners that they're working with not being aligned with that.

>> Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. There's another specific question, so I'll put it to this group, that I think actually begins to capture some of what's underlying this ecosystem idea, which is the recognition that digital data are mobile, very fluid, and they actually make organizations quite porous in an interesting way, or in a way that's different at least from other resources that they've managed. So there's a question, and I'll just ask you to add them – your answers to the list of resources. If anyone knows of any really highly-recommended resources for mapping and assessing organizational dataflow and information flow. One other that I'm familiar with that I actually just used in a workshop in [inaudible] is a result of Oxfam's involvement in the responsible data community. And it's the toolkit that they've created for thinking about responsible data. They have a really, I think, useful picture of the data lifecycle as it moves through organizations, and how so many people, pretty much everybody in an organization needs to be part of that mapping, at least understand the flow. That's up on Oxfam UK's website with a responsible data tag. But I don't know if there are others that people want to make sure we get into this conversations. Some folks on the call at least, are very interest in getting to work, it sounds like.

>> I mean, a couple of year in it, and I meet some – it definitely needs some refreshing. But we put together a group of people at the club with Tiffany White the, what we called then the responsible lead to Hanford. So, yeah, I mean it's a bit more – it goes through the different [inaudible] in there, what's the life cycle, and discusses kind of – yeah, suggested resources and discusses a few things you might want to talk about or things you might want to plan for as [inaudible] the life cycle. And there's a caveat though that some of the links need updating.

>> All right. Well, we've got folks on the call who might be able to help with that, and we'll share that resource. Kelly or Natasha, any others you want to call out right now or?

>> Sure. So Axim would have been the one I would recommend, too. And their responsible data handbook is also great. And CDT has what we call a Digital Decisions Tool which is actually designed to help developers think through the slightly more complex uses of data like, you know, building algorithms to make decisions. But I think the questions there, you know, what data are you col-

lecting, what context was it collected in, you know, who are you doing this for – I think those questions actually work really well for any collection use of data and are meant to – they don't really have answers. They're questions that are meant to raise really critical thinking about the ethical issues underlying the way that you're using it now.

>> Great. And I'm glad you brought up, you know, the ways we're now also having to think about how are we using algorithms and how are we actually beginning to make decisions about this data that may not not be kind of the way we think of humans making decisions, but using other technologies to make decisions. So this leads us right to another question from the audience. The topic of power has come up a few times, and, I guess, mostly in this context. We talked about it as between the people in an organization and the people the organization is trying to work with and for. But what about the parallel relationship between nonprofits and their funders, especially when funders expect or want or demand the sharing of client data with other entities where the nonprofit or the NGA – NGO may not – that may not align with their approach to responsible data? Any thoughts on that dynamic? Any resources for the – addressing that power imbalance, particularly when it comes to the use and sharing of beneficiary data?

>> Yeah. I am glad someone asked this question because one of the really interesting conversations that I had over the summer was with a practitioner that works with very sensitive data, and she was telling me about how over time they've actually been able to work with their donors to kind of really quite extensively scale back the requirements of data collection. So I'm kind of forgetting the example, but it was something from going from exact numbers of people that they were treating, gender, location, all of that, to a simple number. And she really – yeah, it was really heartening to hear that the donor had been receptive to that over time. When I think it just – you know, I mean, it's something that can happen quickly. But I do think it's worthwhile knowing that that can be a conversation that is had. Also I think a lot of donors – I mean donors that I've worked with at least – have their standard recording templates, and to be able to push back and say this is not, you know, this is not standard data that we're dealing with, and there should be exceptions. So I think, yeah, I think there's some power to that. Yeah. That's the one that's coming to mind.

>> Great. Anyone else?

>> Sure, I can [inaudible]. So we've actually been talking to funders recently about how, how they collect data from the grantees, but, well, partly. But also how they share data. So how funders think about sharing data that either they hold about grantees or the activities of grantees and we're doing a project that's hoping to develop a kind of response where they claim that the how and how donors can think about sharing that data in a responsible way. So that – so, yeah, we have a couple of [inaudible] about what we found so far, like we did a kind of landscape scanners, what [inaudible] already, and that kind of thing.

And, generally, I mean, it might sound kind of – I certainly recognize that the power dynamic is – you know, you want to do what the [inaudible] wants in some ways, but, I mean, we have found at least that often [inaudible] is ready with [inaudible] and recognize when they're pushed back and they need us [inaudible] to say like I know this is your usual kind of – you're just following you're usual M.O., but like for these reasons this is not helpful or this is not respecting the rights of the people that we work with because – yeah, I mean, as we said, like some of it is just understanding that there is a lack of understanding that this could have potential negative consequences or unintended consequences or that kind of thing. And then part of it is also just getting people to realize that, and I think the GDPF does this [inaudible], helping people to think of data not as a massive asset, but rather as a potential kind of liability or something that they should be wary of, so many holes with caution and think about carefully.

>> And I'll just add, since I sort of brought up data analytics, that I think donors have a real responsibility to sort of push back against the trend right now toward sort of magic thinking about data that, if we collect a lot of data and, you know, apply some analytics to it we can make, we can definitely make much better decisions and – that's not always true. It's not always backed up by evidence and this collaborative project didn't focus on that. It focused on organizations that are collecting data incidentally to their missions. But there is a trend toward more data-driven decision-making. And that data-driven decision-making and the sort of culture of experimenting with it does tend already to focus more on vulnerable populations. You know, how should we allocate government and social services, you know, leveraging data and data analytics, to sort of triage that and, you know, how can we make people that already depend on social services make better decisions, you know, analyzing data to see like what policies might lead to helping people make better decision. And you know, some of that is not necessarily supported so much by evidence of what works from a policy perspective, as it is just sort of a hunger to try to leverage the data we have to make the best decisions and I think donors really have a responsibility to not rush into those types of projects, and to step back and say, you know, what actually works for people and what is just sort of pie in the sky that is really just an experiment, and no way of using data that we don't necessarily need to engage in and encourage our beneficiaries to engage in.

>> And your comments make me think, you know, the other aspect of this from a – at least from a foundation's perspective, a grant-making foundation's perspective, is that they are also an enterprise in this ecosystem that has the same responsibilities or compliance regulations on security and protection, so to the degree that they're demanding sensitive data from kind of their grantees, they're actually just putting that burden on themselves as well. I think, Natasha, your last point speaks – among other things, you touched on quite a lot there. But both to the capacity of any organization in the social sector to actually understand the nature of deeply data-driven analysis which is by no means widespread and as well as the power and political context that we were talking about earlier

to some degree. The more you move toward quantitative analytic approaches that a few people highly skilled can actually execute, the more you move away from that context spaced and participatory approach that we were discussing earlier. So there really are intentioned with each other. We're getting toward the end of the hour. I want to ask you all one last question. And I think I've gotten most of the ones in from the audience, so thank you to the folks out there who shared their questions. But a very practical question. Should nonprofits and NGOs create end-of-life policies for their post-project data management? And if so, tell us a little bit about what and why.

>> I mean, so organizations of MAU, they have to under the DBPR, so that's a good why, I think [laughter]. I think – yeah, I mean, intentional data retention policies will be – you know have to specify what reflections, why [inaudible], and how long you'll be keeping it for. And something that will be a big change for many organizations because it's not just – I think we often think about things like surveys or explicit data collection, but even things like operational information like consultants that you're working with, when you store their bank details or, I don't know, potential candidates for jobs when you have SUVs, that kind of thing. It's really a – really across organizational piece as we're realizing. And at the end [inaudible] kind of everyone across all teams to think that what this means and to figure out how different people collect personal data. And [inaudible] on terms of an end-of-life policy, a big yes from a –

>> I think Zara already covered it really well, so the only thing I would add is that – going back to the concept that these organizations are often relying on volunteers and other workers is to not just create end-of-life projects for our policies for projects, but also for those sort of less formal workers for when they are no longer working on the project. You know, disabling their email accounts that might have been created with organizations, making sure that they no longer have the access to that data.

>> And I would just add in with a quick anecdote. I would say yes, of course. But I think that we're still extremely far from that in many places because I spoke with at least one practitioner who was absolutely shocked by the idea of deleting data. And his approach had been in a very – in a simple society organization. Simple society organizations getting used to deleting data as opposed to buying into the – we'll just hold onto this forever because eventually it will be useful really goes to the comment earlier about digital data not always being an asset, but being a liability. One of the things that I find striking about just the kind of human understanding of digital data. When you focus people's attention on this is a resource that needs to be taken care of at the end of its life, you focus their attention on the fact that it is a moving, mobile, iterative process that needs to be considered. So I think I agree with you all. It's super important and sometimes ironically getting folks to focus on what to do with it at the end of it might help them understand what they're thinking about when they collect it in the first place. As we're getting up on the hour, I just want to thank each of our panelists for joining us in this conversation as well

as to all of you on the phone. If you missed any part of the conversation or you want to share it with colleagues, it will be available on digitalimpact.org and up on the Digital Impact Podcast on iTunes, and that will happen very quickly, and we'll be sharing that out by social media so you can find it that way. If you want to learn more about how Kelly and Simlab provided technology design and evaluation supports communities all over the world, you can visit simlab.org. To learn more about Natasha and the Center for Democracy and Technology, and their work driving policy for a free and open Internet, please visit cdt.org. And for a closer look at Zara Rahman's team at the Engine Room, including new research on organizational security for civil society, a report I cannot recommend highly enough, visit the engineroom.org. Please check out digitalimpact.org and the Digital Impact Toolkit which is at digitalimpact.io. For more opportunities and a host of resources for advancing the safe, ethical, and effective use of data, and if you enjoyed today's conversation, be sure to join us for more Virtual Roundtables in the coming months. And one more time I encourage you, if there's a topic about digital data and civil society that you'd like to explore, please reach out to us at hello@digitalimpact.org. Once again, I'm Lucy Bernholz at the Digital Civil Society Lab at Stanford PACS. Thanks to Zara, Kelly, and Natasha, and thanks for all of you for joining. Goodbye.