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## Economy

Congress is overlooking many opportunities to have the federal government publish more of the data it already gathers, collect more data that can be put to valuable use, and encourage the private sector to make better use of data, according to a new ...

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Congress is overlooking many opportunities to have the federal government publish more of the data it already gathers, collect more data that can be put to valuable use, and encourage the private sector to make better use of data, according to a **new report** from the Center for Data Innovation, a data-policy think tank. The group outlines 10 steps Congress can take in 2017 to maximize public benefit by optimizing the way data is collected, shared, and used in the United States.

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**Pushing out the government already collects, including:**

1. Establish a permanent open-data policy for the federal government,
2. Allow the U.S. Department of Agriculture to publicly release Common Land Unit data, and
3. Establish an API for legislative data.

**Collecting more data that can be put to valuable use, including:**

4. Develop a complete 3D National Elevation Dataset,
5. Require corporate data transparency, and
6. Address the LGBT data gap.

**Encouraging industries to make better use of data, including:**

7. Adopt universal patient identifiers for healthcare,
8. Incentivize adoption of electronic health records for mental-health providers,
9. Foster use of alternative credit data, and
10. Ensure consumers can access their utility data.

Noting that many of these policies have broad support from stakeholders and already have been introduced as legislation in Congress, Castro says the main holdup is inertia in Washington.

“While areas of bipartisan agreement have been limited in the current political climate, there are easy ways Congress can spur data-driven innovation that already have support from both sides of the aisle,” said Castro. “We just need Congress to pay attention and take action.”

“There is a lot of low-hanging fruit here that would deliver significant value to American consumers and businesses. While it is good that Congress tries to get out of the way of the private sector, it should not forget that it also has an important role to

play in unlocking new opportunities to use data that we haven't even imagined yet,"

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