Unleashing the Power of Big Data: Why We Need All Hands on Deck

Thomas Kalil
Deputy Director for Technology and Innovation
White House Office of Science and Technology Policy &
National Economic Council
tkalil@ostp.eop.gov
May 3, 2013
Administration interest in Big Data (1)

- Economic impact – demonstrated productivity increases for firms that are mastering Big Data and analytics

- Accelerate pace of discovery in science and engineering

- National security/intelligence

- Health – better care at lower costs, new infrastructure for clinical research + drug discovery that integrates EHRs, m-health, omics
Administration interest in Big Data (2)

• Education:
  – Move from data-poor to data-rich domain.
  – Online courses that improve the more students use them.
  – Online courses as “wind tunnel” for learning science

• Smart grid, energy efficiency

• Real-time labor market information
Government role (1)

- Invest in R&D related to Big Data technologies
- Support efforts to expand “Big Data” workforce (e.g. data scientists)
- Support applications of Big Data in national priorities and for agency missions, be a “smart user” of Big Data approaches
- Use challenges to demonstrate what is possible (see, e.g. http://www.kaggle.com and http://www.topcoder.com)
Government role (2)

• Policy issues:
  – Privacy
  – Transborder data flow
  – Global applications (see, e.g. UN Global Pulse)

• Make more government data available in bulk-downloadable, machine-readable format consistent with President’s Open Government Initiative

• Be a catalyst for investments by private sector
March 29, 2012 announcement

• Over $200 million in investments in R&D related to Big Data, both grants and solicitations
• DARPA XDATA program
• Joint solicitation between National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health
• Department of Energy-funded institute in scientific visualization
• NIH 1,000 Genome Project, joint with European Bioinformatics Institute
All Hands on Deck

• Make the “big data” effort a national initiative as opposed to a federal initiative.

• Identify steps that all stakeholders (companies, regions, early adopters, universities, researchers, investors, non-profits, foundations, professional societies, skilled volunteers) have taken and can take to make the most of the opportunities created by Big Data

• High-profile event in Fall 2013 to celebrate and catalyze new and expanded commitments
Examples of actions to advance Big Data (1)

• Universities:
  – New courses and courses of study – e.g. CMU Department of Machine Learning, Northwestern Master’s in Analytics, NCSU MSA
  – MOOCs

• University-industry collaborations
  – MIT + Intel – bigdata@CSAIL
  – UC Berkeley – AMPLAB – NSF + 17 industry collaborators

• Regional efforts
  – Massachusetts Big Data Initiative

• Data challenges (e.g. Hewlett Foundation on automated student assessment)
Examples of actions to advance Big Data (2)

• Open sourcing Big Data software, publishing papers on key results from private R&D (e.g. Hadoop, R, Hbase, Cassandra, Drill, etc.)

• Data philanthropy
  – Orange making 2.5 billion anonymized cellphone records from Cote D’Ivoire available to researchers

• Collaboration with Big Data oriented non-profits (e.g. Datakind)
Examples of actions to advance Big Data (3)

• Collaborations to demonstrate value of Big Data (e.g. treat and prevent risk factors for stroke, heart attack, diabetes)
  – Pilots with rigorous evaluation
  – Strategies for scaling if successful

• Help with national agenda-setting (e.g. Computing Community Consortium, TechAmerica Foundation)

• Your idea here