WHY DATA HAS TO BE IN THE

RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME

Eric Hanselman, Principal Research Analyst at 451 Research, which is a part of S&P Global Market Intelligence, explains why better access to data is critical for enterprises and how a better understanding of data gravity can help them extract value.

In Conversation with Eric Hanselman, Principal Research Analyst, 451 Research

How do you view Data Gravity and why should enterprises take note of it?

Because we have been able to virtualize compute storage, expand our capabilities and interconnect, and it is easy to lose sight of the importance in the way data should be handled. Data gravity is important because, speaking from a physics point of view, data has mass. An organization can extract value from it if it can ensure that the data end up in the right place at the right time.

Can you talk about the impact of data gravity on global financial capitals?

Traditionally, organizations did not have to worry about where data was located simply because so much of the core enterprise infrastructure was on-prem. All those data sources were located close to us. If we think about how organizations have been transformed, and what the process of digital transformation is all about, it is about expanding that enterprise ecosystem. That key data now has to be available in many different places.

If there is specific focus on the creation of data, then there will also be a need to have better access to that data. The financial centers are quite critical, as they are the source of all this data creation. Organizations are looking to leverage that data. If they are going to do that by performing analytics alongside their own data, not only is it critical to be close to where those sources of data are, but you also have to ensure that you can get your own data close to where the data analytics is happening.

How do you see data localization and data sovereignty laws affecting data gravity?

There has been increased awareness about the various aspects of privacy and compliance concerns around data. Organizations are starting to learn what that means from an operational perspective. Not only do you have to look at the operational concerns, but also how that data is being governed. That is going to be a constraining factor. So dealing with issues of data sovereignty and privacy management have become far more critical for organizations.

What is the impact of Digital Realty's recently released Data Gravity Index DGx™? How do you envision customers using it?

One of the challenges with data management is ensuring that organizations have an understanding of what is possible while being able to leverage industry-norm benchmarks. Having benchmarks that establish those kinds of norms is important for organizations to understand where they are and where they need to go.

ABOUT ERIC HANSELMAN

Eric Hanselman is the Principal Research Analyst at 451 Research, a part of S&P Global Market Intelligence. Hanselman coordinates analysis across the broad portfolio of 451 research disciplines, with a hands-on understanding of a range of subject areas, including information security, networks and semiconductors and their intersection in areas such as SDN/NFV, 5G and edge computing. He is a Certified Information Systems Security Professional, a VMware Certified Professional and a member of 451's Center of Excellence in Quantum Technologies.

What role do you see AI, IoT, connected cars, autonomous cars and 5G playing in Data Gravity, especially pertaining to increasing the endpoints?

Organizations are transforming the way they build intelligence for decision-making. They depend on the availability of data to make those decisions. Implementing these transformative technologies depends on the effective movement of data to relevant environments. 5G is important because, even compared to 4G networks, there is so much more data that is moving around in a modern telecommunications network, from an operational perspective. A lot of the things you can do with 5G depend on the real-time availability of data.

What key trends do you foresee in the marketplace for enterprise customers' data? How do you see Data Gravity shaping the Global Digital Economy throughout the next decade?

If we think about where we have come from, then it is evident that the cloud has already rocked our world. We got into an environment in which suddenly we had scalability around the volumes of data that we could accumulate. And, it was far beyond anything we were able to do historically.

The obstacle that we did not think about is the gravity of all of that data that we created. The future, then, will focus on the flexibility that improved access to data delivers. Data gravity's importance is helping organizations understand what those forces are to be put to work for their own benefit. And, in the bigger picture, it also teaches the potential hazards of accumulating data in single large blocks, especially in places where it is hard to access.

"Data Gravity and its impact on our IT infrastructure is a difference-maker for our operations and will only become more important as data continues to serve as the currency of the digital economy. As enterprises become more data-intensive, there's a compounding effect on business points of presence, regulatory oversight and increased complexity for compliance and data privacy that IT leaders are now being forced to solve."

- Munu Gandhi, VP, Core Infrastructure Services, AON plc.

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