The Case for Better Governance of Children's Data: A Manifesto

To maximise the benefits of data use for children and to protect children from harm requires a new model of data governance that is fitting for the 21st century. Our Manifesto comprises ten actions that challenge prevailing approaches to children's data.

We call on the international community to consider these actions when developing and implementing data governance frameworks.

1.

PROTECT children and their rights through child-centred data governance. Such data governance should adhere to internationally agreed standards that minimize the use of surveillance and algorithms for profiling children's behaviour.

2.

PRIORITIZE children's best interests in all decisions about children's data. Governments and companies should give priority to children's rights in their data collection, and processing and storage practices.

3.

CONSIDER children's unique identities, evolving capacities and circumstances in data governance frameworks. Every child is different and children mature as they get older, so data governance regulations must be flexible. Marginalised children must never be left behind.

4.

SHIFT responsibility for data protection from children to companies and governments. Extend the protection measures to all children below the age of 18, regardless of the age of consent.

5.

COLLABORATE with children and their communities in policy building and management of their data. Through distributed models of data governance, children and their communities should have more say in how data is processed, by whom it can be processed, and with whom it can be shared.

6.

REPRESENT children's interests within administrative and judicial processes, as well as redress mechanisms. It is imperative that children's rights are integrated into existing mechanisms, such as the work of data protection authorities.

7.

PROVIDE adequate resources to implement child-inclusive data governance frameworks. Data protection authorities and technology companies must employ staff who understand children's rights, and governments should allocate funding for regulatory oversight.

8.

USE policy innovation in data governance to solve complex problems and accelerate results for children. Policy innovation can help public authorities to make the most of data, while at the same time safeguarding children's rights.

9.

BRIDGE knowledge gaps in the realm of data governance for children. There are some urgent knowledge gaps that need further research to ensure that data governance regulations are evidence-based.

10.

STRENGTHEN international collaboration for children's data governance and promote knowledge and policy transfer among countries. This Manifesto calls for greater global coordination on law and policy. Uncoordinated national-level data governance laws can lead to competing assertions of jurisdiction and conflict.

Learn more about good governance of children's data