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## Press Release

# Panelists: Open Data Standards Enable Oversight

*DATA Act is significant, but it's just the start*

At this morning's Data Breakfast, hosted by the [Data Coalition](#) and presented by [Esri](#), current and former federal analytics leaders, moderated by former Postal Service Inspector General Dave Williams, explored the use of analytics for oversight. The panelists were unanimous: if agencies invest in consistent data standards for the wealth of information that they collect and generate, anti-fraud analytics can generate outsized returns.

Panelists focused on the expected impact of the [Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014 \(DATA Act\)](#), which requires all agencies to adopt standardized fields and formats for their spending information by May 2017. "The DATA Act is significant, but it is just the start," said Department of Justice assistant inspector general Jason Malmstrom. "The government is very good at collecting [spending] data, [but] it is only recently that we have begun to ask what we can do with that data."

Analytics technologies can serve as a "capability accelerator," said [MITRE Corporation](#) principal Gordon Milbourn, "but the data really is the crux of the matter." GAO Center for Enhanced Analytics director Vijay D'Souza cited federal agencies' "analytics iceberg," in which cleaning and preparing data, before it can be analyzed at all, incurs eighty percent of costs.

"We desperately need the DATA Act implemented," concluded Williams, who recently retired as Postal Service Inspector General to join the faculty of George Mason University. "The DATA Act is going to turbocharge agencies' ability to deploy analytics in the fight against fraud," said Data Coalition executive director Hudson Hollister. "That's why our Coalition is insisting that agencies should embrace the law's government-wide data standards - even in advance of the May 2017 deadline."

The DATA Act will align "a number of location-based variables," which will help inspectors general and agency leaders gain "a more holistic view of [each] project or problem of interest," said Esri National Government Account Executive Marcella Cavallaro. Standardized spatial data means "new insights and enhanced analysis."

The Coalition's 2016 [DATA Act Summit](#), scheduled for May 26, 2016 at the Washington Hilton, will feature a panel of inspectors general for a follow-up discussion on this morning's themes.

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### **About the Data Coalition**

The Data Coalition advocates on behalf of the private sector and the public interest for the publication of government information as standardized, open data. Open data enhances accountability, improves government management, reduces compliance costs, and stimulates innovation. Representing a cross-section of the technology industry and implementers, the Coalition's membership includes market leaders such as Workiva, RR Donnelley, Booz Allen Hamilton, and CGI Federal and growing start-ups such as idaciti and CBeyondData. For more information, visit [datacoalition.org](http://datacoalition.org).