



# DATA METAPHOR CARDS

## PROJECT TEAM

ANTON BYKOVSKYKH,  
EMILIA KIIALAINEN,  
JOEL SORMUNEN,  
KAREN VISURI

Aalto University

# LEARN THE METAPHORS

To make the unique qualities of data and key concepts of the data economy easier to grasp, our team has conducted extensive research by analyzing research papers, articles and interviewing data economy professionals. Through this research, we were able to narrow down to 12 metaphors that we find the most useful in

describing data economy related concepts in an easily digestible manner.

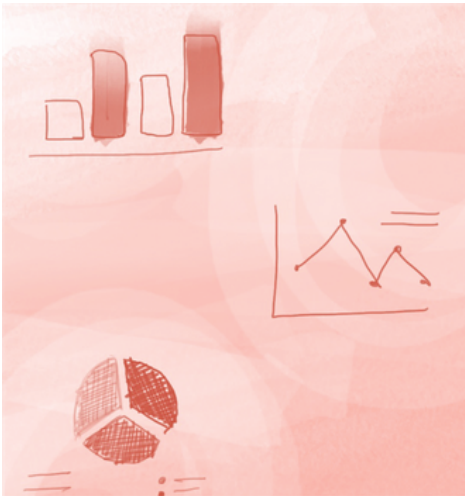
We have gathered the 12 metaphors below - and the following pages show all of the metaphor cards

## DATA AS...

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information  
water  
oil  
capital  
lifeblood  
soil

labor  
sunlight  
currency  
art  
equity  
infrastructure

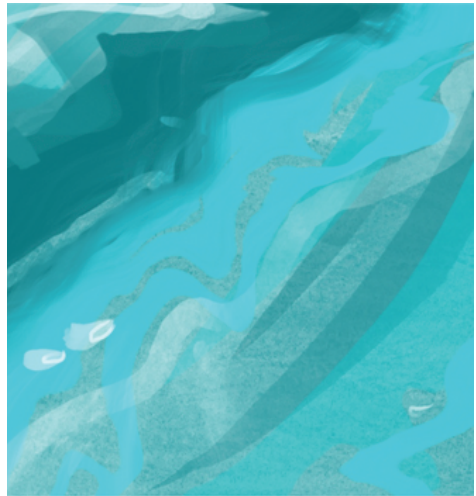


## DATA AS INFORMATION

It is often said that data in itself holds no value - what does is the information derived from it.

Early humans are claimed to have survived and evolved primarily through sharing information and knowledge. Still, when it comes to data, many are hesitant to share it with others.

If we shared data just like information and knowledge, could our society become faster to evolve? What are all the wicked problems that we could already solve with the data that we possess?



## DATA AS WATER

There is one thing that living creatures cannot survive without - water. Everyone has access to water - however, it's not always clean, its sources might not be reliable and in many countries, it's used as a means to rule over people.

Water is vital for all lifeforms to survive and grow. In a similar way, for the sustenance and growth of businesses, data is absolutely critical and has no alternative.



## DATA AS OIL

The concept behind "data as oil" is that just like oil, raw data is not inherently valuable - rather the value is created when it's gathered completely and accurately, connected to other relevant data, and done so in a timely manner.

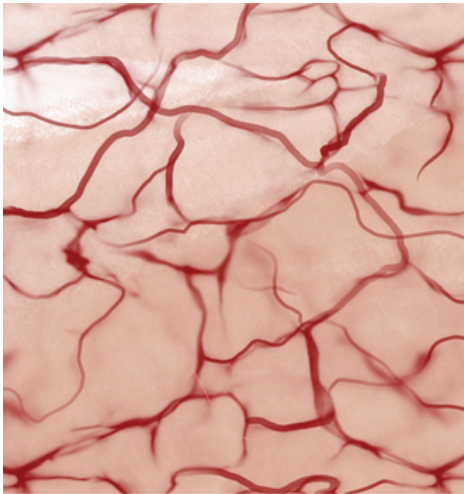
However, the reality about oil is that its supply, as well as its use cases, are finite. The reality with data is the opposite: as long as there are humans around, we will always create more data.



## DATA AS CAPITAL

Businesses have relied on human, financial and intellectual capital to grow and compete over the last few centuries. Now there is a new form of capital - data, which is essential for businesses today to survive and thrive in the digital age.

The collection and circulation of data is a vital element for an increasing number of sectors of contemporary capitalism.



## DATA AS LIFEBLOOD

Data flows through organizations or other systems like blood in the circulatory system - and each day, each hour, there is a myriad of touchpoints to that "static" data. To the modern economy, data is the crucial fluid that carries nutrients (information) to those functions that consume it.

Understanding how the body works will help us better understand the vital part data is playing in all the related systems.



## DATA AS SOIL

To harness value out of soil, one has to take constant care of it. It's not simply a raw material to harvest - the history of humankind has survived by cultivating crops on nutrient-rich soil. While soil has little value on its own, it can bring enormous value when something is grown from it.

In the same vein, data brings little value when it's just ones and zeros lying around - it's what flourishes from it that can bring prosperity. Get your hands dirty!



## DATA AS LABOR

Are we as individuals able to sufficiently harvest the fruits of our labor when it comes to data?

Data as labor is all about fair compensation. Each of us supply data to companies in one way or another, yet it's not necessarily something that we are proud of or are properly rewarded for. Were all data suppliers incentivized, they could provide high-quality data for the digital world around us to prosper.

What if the people supplying the data were to form a union?



## DATA AS SUNLIGHT

"It is like sunshine — we keep using it, and it keeps regenerating." - Ruth Porat, CFO of Google

Every second we are generating vast amounts of data - and most of it is wasted. The value that can be derived from this data depends on how well we are able to capture it, the point of capture, and how quickly we can process it to fulfill our needs - just like sunlight.

It is a resource that won't deplete - but without harnessing its power, we're missing out.





## DATA AS CURRENCY

What if internet users could use their own data as payment?

In traditional currency transactions, people exchange cash for goods and services of equal value. But when data is being exchanged, the transaction benefits one side over the other, at least today. Generators of data get practically nothing. Their data is captured and used to sell them more things in a targeted manner.



## DATA AS ART

"The real value of art is not always revealed by the price set upon it." - Jeffrey Loria, art dealer

It has taken a great amount of creativity to build as many concepts and technological breakthroughs using data as building blocks. Furthermore, both art and data are often perceived as very abstract concepts - something that divides opinions and is difficult to completely understand.

Who determines the value of art? Does anybody have the power to say what is good art and what isn't?



## DATA AS EQUITY

With the growth of data and AI, we expect decisions made by machines to be inherently equal.

However, data is handled by people who have their own subjective experiences and potential biases. Various forms of interpretation biases can alter our understanding of data, leading us to selectively value or dismiss certain outcomes over others.

We should, by all means, avoid these biases and ensure that data can provide equity for each individual.



## DATA AS INFRASTRUCTURE

To see data as infrastructure holds an inherent value of neutrality. It's accessible for all regardless of age, gender or class and crucial for one's everyday life. People need to power their homes, commute to work and buy groceries. Without infrastructure, even the most basic of everyday tasks become difficult.

Still, a well-functioning infrastructure takes plenty of resources and enormous efforts to build. Who should bear the responsibility and who should take the cost? Have we built a neutral infrastructure around data?