



UNSW
AUSTRALIA



CENTRE FOR
BIG DATA RESEARCH
IN HEALTH

Australian Government Productivity Commission
Data Availability and Use
GPO Box 1428
Canberra City ACT 2601

Submission to Productivity Commission Inquiry into Data Availability and Use

In addition to comments that we made in our presentation to the public hearing in Sydney on 28 November 2016, we would like to make a further comment regarding models for trusted user access to data (recommendations 9.7 and 9.8, text on pages 226 of the draft Report and pages 21 and 22 of the Overview report).

We suggest that entities employing trusted users should be responsible for providing secure computing environments for data analysis that meet specific standards, rather than users being limited to environments that are operated by, or specified by, data custodian agencies. This will help to overcome the problem of inadequate and inflexible capacity of such environments that is noted on page 226 of the report, and will ensure that analysis environments evolve to meet the diverse and rapidly changing needs of researchers.

UNSW Australia is currently developing an analysis facility (E-Research Institutional Cloud Architecture, ERICA) that provides strong security (multi-factor authentication, redundant access control mechanisms, multi-layered firewalling and partitioning of workspaces, encryption of data in movement and at rest) and auditable mechanisms for file ingress and egress, within a commercial cloud computing environment which is physically hosted in Australia. This model requires deployment of software only (rather than purchase and maintenance of physical servers), provides a full range of computing capabilities including HPC (high performance computing), and is almost infinitely scalable on demand. It thus offers potential for cost-effective expansion or replication to support trusted user access in multiple institutions.

Yours sincerely

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