

THE COMPANIES CONVERTING YOUR DATA INTO THEIR CAPITAL

WHAT ARE DATA BROKERS?

Data brokers are private companies that generate capital through licensing and selling our sensitive information.

HOW DATA BECOMES CAPITAL

1. **Collect** data from a wide range of sources
2. **Create** comprehensive profiles on most people
3. **License** profiles as Intellectual Property (IP) to maintain legal ownership over the data
4. **Extract** rent on access to data in perpetuity

COLLECTION METHODS

Apps and software that harvest data

- directly from user devices (e.g. location tracking & behavioral data)
- via embedded tracking technologies (e.g. cookies, beacons, pixel tags)

Web scraping (automated programs sift through web pages to collect data)

Purchasing datasets from other data brokers

DATA SOURCES

Internet

- Browsing histories
- Website analytics
- Interactions on social media
- Internet of Things (IoT) data

Commercial

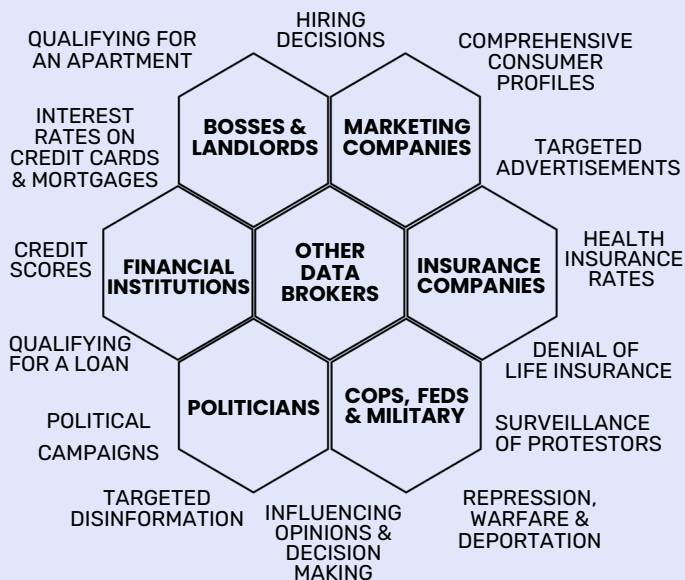
- Credit card purchase history
- Loyalty card information

Public

- Property transactions
- Bankruptcy records
- Voter information
- Census data
- Birth certificates
- Motor vehicle records
- Marriage licenses
- Divorce records
- Court records



DATA BROKER CUSTOMERS



INDUSTRY

Data brokers continue to grow in number and profit because of how much data we generate daily and because of the extremely limited regulatory environment.

- Global industry valued at +280 billion USD in 2023 (Maximize Market Research)
- Over 5000 data broker sites operating in 2024 (Gartner estimation)

For the most up to date information about who they are, and the extent of their political and lobbying power, check out our friends at [TechInquiry.org](https://www.techinquiry.org)

IMPACT

Data brokers impact our privacy by:

- Collecting swaths of our data without our knowledge or consent
- Using our data to make secret decisions that greatly impact our lives (see diagram above)
- Using opaque algorithms which make it nearly impossible to understand if we are being discriminated against
- Enabling information to be abused:
 - Doxxing (the publication of someone's personal information without consent)
 - Scams and fraud
 - Influencing opinions & decision-making

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Data brokers must be reined in with regulatory power. To stay up to date on the status of proposed regulations on data brokers, follow our friends at [FightForTheFuture.org](https://www.fightforthefuture.org)

- Many data broker sites offer the option to "opt-out" of collection (this can be difficult and does not seem to remove all data)
- Paid opt-out services like Mozilla Monitor, Canary, Incogni, and Deleteme, that search through data brokers and remove data (they also cannot guarantee total removal)
- Tor Browser for stronger browser privacy
- Installing ad-blockers
- Limiting use of social media

