

# Rolls Royce leads data collaboration to boost post-lockdown economy

British engineering giant Rolls Royce has announced the launch of Emer2gent, a data alliance collaboration aimed at sharing data across different sectors to jumpstart the economy after the COVID-19 lockdown. In the face of prolonged lockdown and economic catastrophe, could data be the answer to our problems?

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Rolls Royce last week launched Emer2gent, an alliance of companies including [IBM](#) and [Google Cloud](#), along with research organisations like the Leeds Institute of Data Analytics and the [Open Data Institute](#) (ODI). The collaboration aims to bring together data on business, economics, travel, and retail, among other areas, in the hope of providing top insights to support the global recovery from the COVID-19 lockdown.

The idea is to understand and highlight indicators of economic recovery – with the aim of helping governments and businesses to start trading again as quickly as possible.

It's a groundbreaking collaboration, aiming to help businesses of all sizes, and one which will provide all of its findings and insights to the public free-of-charge. Emer2gent has already launched its [website](#), where potential members

and collaborators can register their interest, and start following the alliance's findings through their blog.

Carole Gorski, global director of the R2 Data Labs (Rolls Royce's own data innovation research centre), described the urgency for this sort of collaboration.

*"We want the global economy to get better as soon as possible so people can get back to work. Our data innovation community can help do this and is at its best when it comes together for the common good."*

Identifying behaviour changes will play a big part in the insights that Emer2gent aims to deliver.

"People, businesses and governments around the world have changed the way they spend, move, communicate and travel because of COVID-19," Carole Gorski says.

Consumer behaviour has been completely disrupted by the pandemic. UK supermarkets recorded their biggest ever month in March, taking in an extra £2B, while at the other end of the spectrum, travel, sports, and live entertainment are among those who will have seen next to zero activity.

Emer2gent's data sets aim to understand and analyse data around changing behaviour that will help businesses to respond once they can reopen or recommence activity. The alliance will do this through fusing economic data with behaviour and sentiment data – which measures people's emotional responses.

Google already uses sentiment analysis software for advertising, marketing, and social media purposes. Sharing its software and its data capabilities will be instrumental in providing leading insights.

*“Google Cloud is proud to be involved in such an important project as we all work together to support business globally during these extraordinary times,” Rajh Das, manufacturing and industrial lead for Google Cloud in the UK and Ireland.*

Collaborative spirit has taken the economy by storm in recent weeks as businesses put their heads together to find solutions to the urgent problems that they are currently facing.

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Novartis, GlaxoSmithKline, and Johnson & Johnson, ordinarily rivals in the pharmaceutical industry, are part of the collaboration to jointly find a vaccine and treatment for COVID-19.

Open sourcing is another example of this, where companies make freely available software or designs that they’d ordinarily charge for. Facebook, for example, has made mapping tools and data available to researchers trying to work out how to stem the spread of the virus.

IBM and Google Cloud, both competing in the cloud software space, will hope the same approach will aid the Emer2gent project.

The economic outlook is not promising. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has predicted a 3% fall in growth, at the cost of around \$9 trillion in GDP, making it the worst recession since the Great Depression.

Unemployment is through the roof, with 20M unemployment claims filed since the shutdown in the US alone, while businesses remain closed for the foreseeable future.

Felix Marx, CEO at Truata, the data analytics organisation that has joined the

collaboration, sees a collective response as a true responsibility of these large companies—a now or never scenario.

*“We are living in unprecedented times. And, at this moment of great uncertainty, we must recognise that we all play a role in addressing the global challenge as quickly and efficiently—but also as responsibly—as possible.”*

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