WHAT'S BIG DATA ALL ABOUT

This is a popular term used to describe the exponential growth and availability of data, both structured and unstructured. Structured data –are familiar tools like Excel, Access, and Outlook . Unstructured sources are resources like the Internet, and social media channels and reams of paper transactions. As for the exponential growth, we have seen the amount of data generated from the beginning of time until 10 years ago grow to 5 Exabyte's of data (1000 to the 6th power). By 2012 this grew to 2.7 Zeta Bytes (1000 to the 7th power). By 2015 global data will grow to be three times larger. This is possible because storage is getting cheaper, the internet is making information cycles shorter, and the world is getting smaller.

Gartner defines big data as the three V's:

- Volume: Size of data (how big it is)
- Velocity: How fast data is being generated
- Variety: Variation of data types to include source, format, and structure

Big Data is definitely changing the way business is done in the Supply Chain Arena. We have seen a significant shift in the way data is captured, stored and accessed. Historically, the primary source of data had been the paper freight bill. We would receive it from the carrier, perform data entry and charge extra if a client wanted to capture more than the standard data needed to audit and process the bill for payment. Today, over 97% of the transactions are electronic and where we receive paper bills, we scan or use OCR to capture data making the availability of data less cost sensitive. We also receive data from our shipper clients that we electronically match to freight bills. This does three things – it allows us to validate that the shipment belongs to our client – it validates the accuracy of information on the bill we receive – and finally it appends detailed shipment information about individual products shipped down to the part number and is included in the freight bill record that will now be stored in our data base.

It was not too many years ago that folks would say parcel data is too costly to try to manage. These were and still are typically low dollar value transactions. Yet today with the ability to receive these transactions electronically, smart shippers are balancing the scales of information that had typically been tipped in the carriers favor. Carriers typically knew more about the shipper's movements than the shipper did. With the ability to give shippers access to detailed information - Shippers can now negotiate from a knowledgeable position knowing exactly what they are shipping by zone, average weight per package service level detailed data on accessorial charges – Negotiations that had been a tug of war are now more fact based.

Big Data offers great opportunities for companies of all sizes in all industries regardless of the mode of transportation they use. An executive may want summary transportation data across the company's product lines. Managers may want more detail that is focused only on the areas that he or she oversees. Tools like our Data2Inform^{SM} tool takes the hunch and guess work out of day-to-day decisions. We provide a powerful easy to use IBM Cognos based platform that that provides these analytics.   Decision makers now have the actionable information they need to make more informed decisions. We are collecting and our clients are using many different forms of information that used to just pass us by.

We want to help you and your company benefit from Big Data. Our Professional Services team stands ready to support you in controlling your transportation expenses and freight cost analysis. Please contact Leif Holm-Andersen, Executive Director of Professional Services at Leif.holm-andersen@data2logistics.com or +1 239 425 8050.