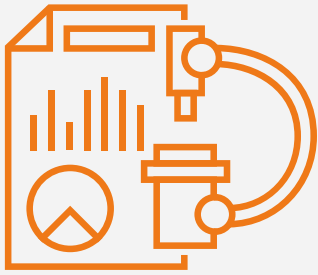


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Data with benefits

Orbis data is not only a boon for business, but a resource for reporters and researchers alike

Data can be powerful if it's used well. It stops aeroplanes colliding, spots cancer on medical scans, lets you pay in an instant for anything, anywhere. It's even given rise to 'smart' farming, collecting data from space to help grow food sustainably around the world.

Bureau van Dijk was one of the first organizations to harness the value of company data in the late 1980s, blending and linking various domestic data projects to make a comparable European and, ultimately, global dataset. Bureau van Dijk's powerful data tool Orbis helps businesses prevent fincrime and detect risk. But it has some more surprising uses in the academic and research world.



Data based deductions

Ever wondered what makes start-up businesses take off? Academics and policy developers are using Orbis to uncover the conditions that help small businesses flourish, from increased patent registrations to environmentally friendly innovations.

One [2019 study](#), which used Orbis company data combined with [OECD](#) patent information found that, rather than hampering business growth, tough environmental regulation in fact stimulates innovation, driving growth of 'gazelles', or firms that show higher than average growth rates. "The results confirm that eco-innovations are likely to augment the effects of generic innovation on firm growth," say authors Colombelli, Krafft and Quatraro.

Certainty around the benefits of environmental action could help support small businesses where growth is stymied by climate risk. "Climate vulnerability increases... cost of debt," note the authors of a [SOAS 2019 study on financial inclusion](#), which used Orbis data for its analysis. "This affects firms' cost of capital in two ways: it raises the costs... and it induces financial exclusion as credit-constrained firms are priced out of the market."

Eco-innovations are just a small part of a surge in patent activity registered with the European Patent Office, according to an Orbis based 2019 study from Milan and Southampton Universities, "[The rush for patents in the Fourth Industrial Revolution](#)," which finds that ever younger innovators are filing patents in the EU, mostly related to networked devices.



A revealing resource

As well as academics, journalists play an invaluable role in helping us analyse the business world. Orbis research supports investigations covering companies in all geographies and sectors, helping the media to create reports and rankings that help specialists to do their jobs.

[Global Finance](#) compiles its ranking of the top 50 public industrial companies worldwide using Orbis each year; the Fortune 500 ranking is also compiled with Orbis data. Many [Sunday Times business rankings](#) use Fame, a Bureau van Dijk UK and Ireland product that supplements Orbis data with further company information. From M&A activity to the number of firms run by women, Orbis helps journalists to shine a light on the business world for specialist professionals and the wider public.

For investigative journalists seeking to build a clear picture of those in the public eye, Orbis can uncover details of business holdings and commercial associations. From The Times to the Mirror Group, Al Jazeera to the Bristol Cable, publications rely on Orbis data to confirm facts, helping to hold influencers and officials to account.



Pinpointing performance

Data can only be powerful when it is accurate. [2019 research by the University of Cologne](#) into developing models for the prediction of bankruptcy used Orbis data to compare and analyse its results. This highlighted inaccuracies in other data sources, allowing revisions that led to the identification of several key factors that can support bankruptcy prediction.

Business performance is closely linked to corporate governance and ownership structures, scholars from the University of South Carolina find. In "[Effectiveness of 'Good' Governance Policies Across Contexts](#)" Orbis, which holds ownership information on more than 360 million companies across the globe, was used to evaluate the relationship between corporate governance, ownership structure and performance.

"Internal mechanisms cannot attenuate the negative effect of excessive control even in contexts with advanced external institutions," the research finds. "That is, in closely held firms, 'good' corporate governance policies cannot safeguard value creation from being expropriated by UCOs [ultimate controlling owners]."

Orbis' applicability to such a wide range of research uses is summed up in a [2019 OECD working paper](#): "It is the largest available cross-country firm-level database for economic and financial research, which contains not only publicly listed but also privately-owned companies."



Orbis is a growing database of companies and other entities.

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