LUMO INSIGHTS

Thursday, 5 November 2026

Palantir’s NHS data platform in doubt as voters rebuff AI data centres

Executive Summary

Palantir’s flagship NHS data platform is facing a credibility challenge, just as US voters in multiple states have moved to clamp down on water- and energy-hungry AI data centres. Meanwhile, Thomson Reuters has demonstrated the upside of having unique, trusted data: its Reuters News business saw a surge in revenue from licensing content for AI models. Each of these developments shows that the fate of AI initiatives - whether success or setback - ultimately comes down to data quality, governance, and trust.

Palantir’s NHS data platform faces credibility test

A flagship data platform intended to transform the UK’s National Health Service (NHS) is facing scrutiny after a rights group revealed that many hospitals said they hadn’t adopted it (www.theregister.com [1]). Medact, a health campaign group, obtained Freedom of Information responses from NHS hospital trusts indicating that **21%** of those listed as users of Palantir’s Federated Data Platform reported they were not using it at all (www.theregister.com [2]). The £330 /million Palantir system is supposed to unify patient data and improve care, but this uptake gap casts doubt on the platform’s real impact. Palantir has touted impressive outcomes from the system - such as helping to deliver **100,000 extra operations** and a **12%** reduction in discharge delays (www.theregister.com [3]) - but the UK’s statistics regulator has already warned NHS England to ensure it does not overstate these benefits (www.theregister.com [4]). For data leaders, the episode underscores that without genuine adoption and trust in data platforms on the ground, even well-funded AI initiatives will struggle to deliver promised value.

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US voters rebuff AI data centres over sustainability fears

As the need for AI-ready data infrastructure grows, so do public concerns about its environmental footprint. On **4 November 2026**, voters across multiple US states approved nearly all of **41** local ballot measures to restrict new data centre projects (www.cnbc.com [1]). These referendums were driven by community alarm over the massive electricity and water demands of AI supercomputing. One study warned that AI’s water consumption could equal the basic annual needs

of **1.3 /billion** people by 2030 (news.un.org [2]), highlighting the sustainability challenge. Even tech leaders have taken note of the backlash - Elon Musk quipped that **“data centres in space [are] looking pretty appealing right now”** in response to the election results (www.euronews.com [3]). For organisations planning AI expansions, the message is clear: future data infrastructure projects must address environmental impacts and community concerns or risk delays, higher costs and regulatory hurdles.

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Thomson Reuters reaps rewards from trusted data

On a more positive note, **Thomson Reuters** is showing how quality data can translate into AI success. In its 3 November earnings report, the company said that licensing its vast news archives to generative AI developers helped drive a **56%** jump in Reuters News revenue for the third quarter (www.globalbankingandfinance.com [1]). The Reuters news division saw sales climb 12% year-on-year, boosted by a surge in AI training data deals that lifted transaction revenues to $44 /million (www.globalbankingandfinance.com [2]). One market analyst noted “strong demand for Thomson Reuters’ products, including Westlaw and CoCounsel, with no evidence to date of a slowdown from AI-native entrants” (www.globalbankingandfinance.com [3]) - a sign that the firm’s 175-year trove of legal, tax and news data is providing a durable competitive edge. The takeaway for other leaders is that investing in unique, well-governed data assets can open up new high-margin AI opportunities, while those without such data may find themselves having to pay for access to someone else’s.

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Leaders flag the AI data readiness gap

Even as enthusiasm for AI grows, studies show that few organisations have truly AI-ready data. In a global benchmark of 1,900 enterprises, **only 3.1%** were found to have reached the highest “optimised” level of AI maturity (www.idc.com [1]). Similarly, a survey of senior data and analytics leaders by Precisely and **Drexel University** revealed that **43%** cite data readiness as their most significant barrier to aligning AI projects with business objectives (www.lebow.drexel.edu [2]). Finance chiefs share these concerns: in an EY poll, **61%** of CFOs said poor data quality and bias are their top obstacle when seeking investment for new AI initiatives (www.ey.com [3]). The clear message is that while corporate confidence in AI may be high, the foundational work of improving data quality, governance and skills is lagging - and closing that gap is now an executive priority.

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Key Statistics

- 21% - NHS hospital trusts listed as Palantir's data platform users that said they are not using it (Medact)
- 43% - Global data leaders citing data readiness as top barrier to AI alignment (Precisely/Drexel University)
- 61% - CFOs citing poor data quality and bias as the top barrier to new AI investments (EY survey)
- 56% - Increase in Reuters News revenue from licensing news content for AI models in Q3 2026 (Thomson Reuters)
- 1.3 billion - People whose basic annual water needs equal AI's projected 2030 water usage (UN University)

KEY TAKEAWAY

Put your organisation's data to the test. Validate that your data platforms are accurate, trusted and actually being used as intended, and invest now to close any data quality or governance gaps before scaling AI.

Sources

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