Transparency, Local Data and the Web

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Public Sector Transparency Board
Chair CLG Local Public Data Panel

Eland House, 9th September 2010
Introduction

• Open Government Data is creating waves

• Governments, local authorities, cities, organizations, individuals - all releasing data

• Tim Berners-Lee and myself appointed 9th June 2009 and set about creating data.gov.uk

• Reappointed Public Sector Transparency Board June 2010
The Power of Open Data

Cholera cases

Bicycling traffic accidents
The Power of Open Data
Port-au-Prince 〈 12 Jan 2010
The Power of Open Data
Port-au-Prince ≅ 25 Jan 2010
from this…
to this… in 13 days
Accomplishments

• data.gov.uk itself (now with almost 4000 datasets)
  – Open source and open standards
  – Key data sets released inc OS OpenData, COINS etc.
• a new open licence for Crown Copyright information
• overcoming the many objections to transparency of data
• community of data users and developers who hold the teams to account
• political and technical leadership
Coalition Government’s Commitments

• Prime Minister’s letter to Ministers on Transparency and Open Data - established Public Sector Transparency Board

• Creating a powerful new right to government data, enabling the public to request and receive government datasets

• Publishing data in open and standardised formats

• Transforming the culture of the public sector to one that presumes datasets should be open and shared with the public on an ongoing basis.

• Bringing in new measures to enable to public to scrutinise the government’s accounts

• Requiring public bodies to publish online job titles, salaries and expenses of senior staff

• Publishing in full government contracts for good and services worth over £25,000 …
"Public Data" is the objective, factual, non-personal data on which public services run and are assessed, and on which policy decisions are based, or which is collected or generated in the course of public service delivery.
Public Data Principles

• Public data policy and practice will be clearly driven by the public and businesses who want and use the data, including what data is released when and in what form

• Public data will be published in reusable, machine-readable form

• Public data will be released under the same open licence which enables free reuse, including commercial reuse

• Public data will be available and easy to find through a single easy to use online access point (data.gov.uk)

• Public data will be published using open standards, and following relevant recommendations of the World Wide Web Consortium
Public Data Principles

- Public data underlying the Government’s own websites will be published in reusable form for others to use
- Public data will be timely and fine grained
- Release data quickly, and then re-publish it in linked data form
- Public data will be freely available to use in any lawful way
- Public bodies should actively encourage the re-use of their public data
- Public bodies should maintain and publish inventories of their data holdings
Early examples of OGD - ASBOrometer

ASBOrometer is a mobile application that measures levels of anti-social behaviour at your current location (within England and Wales) and gives you access to key local ASB statistics.

ASBOrometer is available for iPhone and Android phones. Get it FREE from the iTunes App Store or Android Market now!

This app was created by Jeff Gillies and made possible by the data.gov.uk initiative, which is opening up UK government data for public reuse.
Early examples of OGD – NHS dentists

UK Dentists

Find your nearest NHS dentist quickly and easily!
The National Health Service has over 7,500 dental surgeries across England but finding one can be a difficult and time-consuming task. This app is based on data provided by the UK’s Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) and covers 85.4% of all registered NHS dental surgeries in England.

Search for an NHS dentist around your current location, or look for one in another area (where you may be moving to, or for a friend) via a simple place name or postcode search. Distances can be displayed in metric or imperial units (configured in the application preferences).

UK Dentists uses the built-in GPS on the iPhone to get your current location, but can also locate an iPod Touch in built-up WiFi areas. If your location cannot be determined automatically then you can always enter your postcode to get started. Please note that an internet connection is required to get location and map data.

* Data reproduced under the terms of the Office of Public Sector Information (OPS) Click-Use Licence.

Application Screenshots

Click on any of the images to see a larger version

Buy on iTunes
Power of OGD – Location…
The Power of OGD – Spending…

A few years ago I helped the Department for International Development run a twelth international conference in Bangladesh, on the subject of migration. Its general conclusion was that migration is a good thing – remittances from migrant workers to their home countries far outstrip official aid, and, arguably, do more good.

I’m guessing that this is exactly the sort of jamboree the new government had in mind when, in opposition, it promised to open up the detailed ledgers of public spending. While I, and many real experts, might defend spending tens of thousands of taxpayer pounds promoting migration. It’s not hard to see what the popular press would have made of it. Had they known about it.

In the new transparency age, ushered in today by the release of the first tranche of public data from the Treasury’s jubilantly guarded Coins (Combined Online Information System), the migration conference would have had a very much roseier ride instead.

In fact, in the current climate, the chance of funding it would be zero. Likewise, whole swathes of public spending that doesn’t immediately fall into the categories politicians like to boast about – ballots on the beat, hospital beds, etc.

Despite this danger, I’m heartily in favour of the opening of Coins along with dismayed government spending data. It’s the latest stage in a revolution that was beyond our wildest dreams when Charlie Arthur and I launched the Guardian's Free Our Data campaign, four years ago.
The Power of OGD – Publish it…and the apps flow
Local Matters

- New items of Local government spending over £500 – council by council from Jan 2011
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“Greater openness in spending is the best way to root out waste, spot duplication and increase value for money.”
Local Matters

- “Greater openness in spending is the best way to root out waste, spot duplication and increase value for money.”
"Now it's our turn. I don't believe in one rule for councils and one for this Department. Central Government spends billions of tax pounds every year and transparency at this level of spending is just as important."

"This Department, like the rest of Whitehall, needs to look at where every penny is going and getting this data out in the open will help that process." SoS 12-8-10
And more to come…

- New local government contracts and tender documents for expenditure over £500 to be published in full from Jan 2011
- …information on senior salaries, names and job descriptions, councillor allowances and expenses, minutes and papers of council meetings, job vacancies that will enable people to see why council wage bills are so high and how many of the positions are for key local services frontline service data - including rubbish and recycling rates, council tax collection rates and detail of major planned projects data such as food hygiene reports for food outlets - information which is routinely collected and of interest to residents, but not currently shared in an easily accessible format
- Crime data to be published at a level that allows the public to see what is happening on their streets from Jan 2011
Data Publishing – Star Quality

★  Put your data on the Web (any format)
★★ Make it available as structured data (e.g. Excel, CSV, instead of PDF)
★★★ Use open, standard formats (e.g. XML, RDF)
★★★★ Use URLs to identify things (so people and machines can point at your data)
★★★★★ Link your data to other people’s data
Why 5★ Linked Data?

- National digital infrastructure being built
- URIs for schools, roads, bus stops, post codes, admin boundaries...
- Some of the data links across and connects other data together
- Key data link points exist
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Joining up the dots…
http://map.psi.enakting.org/how
Joining up the dots...
http://map.psi.backlinks.org/
Joining up the dots – UK Linked Data
http://myarea.psi.enakting.org/

How good is my area?
feedback ... please email us

Sources:
statistics.data.gov.uk, data.ordnancesurvey.co.uk,
IMD Database, Boundary data from OS Open Data

This is a BETA app developed in a EnAKTing hack day. It is built on top of Semantic Web technologies and Linked Data.

It displays a region and its surroundings showing how good are those areas based on the IMD database ranking.

Ward Indicators (higher is better)
Source: data.gov.uk, openpsi.org and data.ordnancesurvey.co.uk

Area: Bevois

group by area
The Local Data Panel: Current Activities

Working with new Transparency division on 3 key tasks

1. How to standardise local authority data and which data should be standardised as a priority

2. Assisting local authorities/public bodies to work through technical/policy issues relating to making data openly available – in particular the Jan 2011 data release;

3. Encouraging citizens, developers, public and private sector organisations to access and exploit data provided by CLG and LAs
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<thead>
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<th>Loss of licensing revenue</th>
<th>National security</th>
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<td>Loss of control</td>
<td>Complexity</td>
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<td>Legal challenges</td>
<td>Investment</td>
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<td>Exposure</td>
<td>Capacity building required</td>
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<td>Procedural changes</td>
<td>Authenticity and quality</td>
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<td>Customer service</td>
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Oh yes we can…

More transparency
what is going on?

More accountability
and is this acceptable?

More localism
because it matters to me, my family, my locale

More economic/social capital
generates opportunities

More engagement
we can extend and improve

More argument
data for evidenced based policy