

Revision of Scribe minutes of the plenary talk of Beatrice Covassi at the workshop 'Encouraging data usage by commercial developers' on 3 December 2014

Source: http://www.w3.org/2013/share-psi/wiki/Lisbon/Scribe#Wednesday_3rd_December_2014_.28Workshop_Day_1.29

Beatrice Covassi, Deputy Head of Unit, Data Value Chain, European Commission DG CONNECT

“I will start from the bigger picture”. The EC remains very keen on Open Data policies. I am representing the Data Value chain unit which is working on all aspects of the data economy, including Open Data and Big Data.

In this context, the Communication COM(2014)442 'Towards a thriving data-driven economy' was published in July. Amongst others, it outlines that progress towards a thriving data-driven economy requires community building and the right framework conditions.

- Framework conditions for example include fostering Open Data policies and developing an adequate skills base of data professionals. In addition, framework conditions embrace regulatory aspects (such as ownership/transfer of data and copyright issues).
- To strengthen Europe's Big Data community and help lay the foundations for the thriving data-driven economy of the future, the EC signed a Memorandum of Understanding for a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) on Big Data. The EU has earmarked over €500 million of investment which private partners from industry are expected to match at least four times over.

With relation to Open Data, Beatrice explained that the PSI Directive was updated and modernised in 2013 and that it is now being transposed into national legislations, the deadline being July 2015. To prepare this process, meetings take place on a regular basis in the PSI Expert Group which consists of representatives from the EU Member States. The EC also provided guidelines on charging, data sets and licenses. Open Data should generally be accessible and available for all, at zero or at very low cost. Due to the fact that materials in national museums, libraries and archives now fall under the scope of the revised Directive, there will now also be access to more exciting and inspirational content.

One of the major new European initiatives in opening data is the pan-European Open Data portal. The main idea is to build a portal of portals for Open Data to increase synergies and the creation of value. The metadata repository of the pan-European Open Data portal will be an entry point to the more than 70 Open Data portals throughout Europe. The first operational version of this portal is foreseen by the end of 2015.

But what do we do to convince people to use Open Data? Trying to achieve added value, how do we realise the matchmaking among the public and private stakeholders of Open Data?

Beatrice referred to the Open Data 500 project in which she was involved. The Open Data 500 is the first comprehensive study of U.S. companies that use open government data to generate new business and develop new products and services.

A European example of engaging the private sector in the implementation of Open Data policies is the Open Data Users Group established as part of the UK's Open Data strategy. Amongst others, it helps to build business cases on how additional government funding for free release of data should be prioritised. Another example is the Spanish government's regular assessment of the impact of PSI re-use on the national market and its dialogue with the private sector data re-users.

It would be good to see more of such engagements of Open Data re-use in commercial contexts in the EU-28.

A new EU initiative is the upcoming European Open Data integration and reuse incubator for SMEs to foster the development of open data supply chains. It strives to attract the participation of European companies willing to contribute their own data assets as Open Data for experimentation or to integrate Open Data with their own private data as the basis for innovative applications. This is a very promising avenue.

All in all, Open Data can be used to launch commercial and nonprofit ventures, to do research, to take data-driven decisions, and to solve complex problems. Finally, Beatrice stressed that the EC is looking with great interest towards the outcomes of this workshop, i.e. the discussed Best Practices that can be reused across the EU-28 Member States. In conclusion, she stated that we should 'think globally but act locally'. This will bring added value.

Questions from the audience

Q1: Can we see the problem from the commercial aspect; What is the relationship between PSI and commercial purposes? A1: This is really on how you scale up to make money. Open Data policy is an established policy but the Big Data one is not. We need to sector by sector make use of Open Data in combination with private data in a smarter way towards a data-driven economy. Biggest incentives are successful applications.

Q2: How can you measure and evaluate the transposition of the Directive? A2: Via regular meetings in the PSI Expert Group which consists of representatives from the EU Member States. Based on practices with the Directive, they should identify recommendations and Best Practices.

Q3: In the UK, postal address data as Open Data is difficult to access, what sort of approaches does the EC have to address the problem? A3: In this context, privacy of personal data needs to be respected. Another general aspect we should pay attention to are potential discriminatory effects of Open Data applications. An US example of a street bump app illustrates unintended discriminatory effects of Open Data applications. In this case where

street problems can be notified to the authorities, the use of a smartphone may be discriminatory, supporting the quick fixing of problems only in rich areas.