

Session Proposal

Open Data Economy: from 'Wow' to 'How'

Session chairs

Dr. Michele Osella, Head of Business Model & Policy Innovation Unit, Istituto Superiore Mario Boella, Via Pier Carlo Boggio, 61 – 10138 Torino, Italy, michele.osella@ismb.it, [@micheleosella](https://twitter.com/micheleosella)

Dr. Enrico Ferro, Head of Innovation Development Area, Istituto Superiore Mario Boella, Via Pier Carlo Boggio, 61 – 10138 Torino, Italy, enrico.ferro@ismb.it, [@egferro](https://twitter.com/egferro), [blog](#)

Abstract

This highly interactive and cross-disciplinary session calls upon a broad range of stakeholders to debate blind spots still affecting the yearned-for Open Data Economy. As the title suggests, the idea behind this session is to overcome the great deal of initial excitement ('wow') – frequently accompanied by a leap of faith about the future to come – in order to get a realistic vision that draws on evidence to distill actionable insights ('how'). Consequently, the main objective of the session is to portray a neat and up-to-date picture of the multi-faceted mechanisms underlying the creation and appropriation of value from Open Data. Outcomes of the discussions – in the guise of experiences brought by participants, lessons learnt, and guidelines – will represent valuable takeaways for policy makers.

1. Background

In recent years the Open Data philosophy has gained a considerable momentum around the world. A significant push towards the opening and re-use of the information generated by the public sector during its day-to-day activities has been determined by ingrained expectations of [economic impact](#): in fact, the release of PSI datasets, besides enabling novel and promising forms of governmental [transparency](#) and [accountability](#), paves the way to a new panoply of third-party developed [products and services](#).

Although a generally held view portrays a great deal of commercial potential sitting there in PSI – compared by Neelie Kroes to a [goldmine](#) awaiting to be unlocked – the actual re-use performed by private sector entrepreneurs is striving to take-off due to the presence of several inherent roadblocks.

Taking stock of this inescapable evidence, light has to be shed on both sides of the PSI market: demand and supply. Regarding the former perspective, a certain vagueness surrounds the [rationales](#) underpinning business endeavors, some of which are struggling to take a growth path, not to mention the ones striving for remaining in black. Nevertheless, the moderate pace of market expansion cannot be ascribed only to paucity of entrepreneurial maturity. In fact, on the [supply side](#) the non-infrequent governmental proclivity to throw data 'over the wall' while fulfilling a legal obligation or chasing a fashionable fad tends to eclipse the [value orientation](#), thus hindering the ascent of a full-fledged Open Data Economy.

Hurdles still standing on the way to PSI commercial re-use – residing either on the demand or on the supply side – oblige entrepreneurs, researchers, and policy makers to rethink aspects that lie at the intersection of technology, business, and policy. In order to turn the potential of unlocking significant economic value into veritable reality, an accurate review has to be conducted through multiple lenses: spanning the gamut from business modeling to public incentives, a thriving Open Data ecosystem passes through – *inter alia* – fair licenses, accessible prices, stability of legal frameworks, continuity of data availability, quality of data and metadata, and recourse to machine-readable formats.

2. Topics under the Lens

The session outline will be defined as follows.

Introduction to the Open Data Economy (10 minutes). The session chairs will provide the audience with a bird's-eye-view of the role played by PSI as purveyor of economic growth. A selection of figures and findings drawing on well-recognized studies conducted at international level ([PIRA EU](#), [MEPSIR EU](#), [Vickery EU](#), [POPSIS EU](#), [Capgemini](#), [Deloitte](#), [ISMB](#), [McKinsey](#), just to mention a few of them) will be commented in order to make the audience acquainted with the topic and, furthermore, to clearly define the problem setting. In addition, some hints on the [economics of PSI](#) will be given through bite-sized steps, explaining in particular why PSI could be considered in the guise of a public good when released in accordance with the "[Open Definition](#)", thus becoming Open Government Data. Finally, the 'pipeline' of PSI re-use will be pinpointed by touching upon the manifold commercial positions that may be identified in the Open Data value chain.

The demand side of the Open Data Economy (25 minutes). After having appropriately set the scene, this stint will delve into the discussion of real business endeavors leveraging PSI as key input. The distinctive trait of this highly interactive slot is the opportunity for entrepreneurs and startupperes present in the room to pitch (in a time-limited 'elevator pitch' format) their business ideas. When necessary, cases presented by attendees will be compared with [case studies](#) in the limelight with the intent of providing the audience with a benchmark they are familiar with.

The supply side of the Open Data Economy (15 minutes). Once ascertained that a thriving Open Data ecosystem passes through the attainment of [sustainability even on the supply side](#), this portion of the session will hone in on the shortcomings currently affecting the supply side. Experiences and expertise of participants will be leveraged in order to appropriately frame policy conundrums and their roots. In particular, attendees will be prompted to provide their opinion on how the open-by-design principle may be conducive to a win-win situation characterized by sizable benefits internalized also on the PSI holders' side, all this in a period when public budget constraints are tighter than ever. Stepping into the shoes of policy makers, participants will also ponder on government's yardsticks for gauging the ultimate feasibility of Open Data programs.

Enablers, barriers, and policy guidelines (10 minutes). The two afore-mentioned explorative slots will be followed by a conclusive wrap-up in which the audience – facilitated by session chairs – summarizes the enabling factors that render PSI more tractable for entrepreneurial purposes as well as major obstacles still standing on the way to PSI commercial re-use. Such a helicopter view will be conducive to the recognition of powerful levers – in particular the ones that are largely under-exploited – for catalyzing the uptake of the Open Data Economy. In order to collect and systematize a cohort of actionable insights, rapporteur(s) will help chairs to sum up common threads running through the cases discussed, to recap prominent lessons learnt, and to distill takeaways both at entrepreneurial and at policy level.

In line with the informal atmosphere characterizing the entire workshop, this session will follow an open, collaborative, and participant-led format. Therefore, the adopted style will encourage substantial audience participation throughout the session in order to benefit from experiences and expertise brought in by the vibrant "Share-PSI 2.0" community. In this context, the role of session chairs will be to stimulate a genuine innovation impulse by providing an 'ice-breaker' introduction, easing the participative process, moderating the resulting debate as well as eliciting needs and ideas through 'maieutic' driving questions.

3. Target Audience

The target audience for this session includes (but not limited to):

- Entrepreneurs and startupperes
- IT professionals – especially novices in business modeling – willing to turn their technological dreams into real products
- Researchers having a penchant for the marketability of their results
- Policy makers committed to the opening of PSI vaults as springboard for unleashing a new wave of entrepreneurship

4. Experience of Session Chairs

Dr. [Michele Osella](#) is the Head of Business Model & Policy Innovation Unit at Istituto Superiore Mario Boella, being in charge of a multi-disciplinary team studying economic, social and policy implications of ICTs. In the academic sphere he is Adjunct Professor in innovation management and business modelling at the Polytechnic of Turin. Prominent strands of research on which he is focused are Open Data economy, social innovation, smart city economics and finance as well as Internet economics, with a keen interest for ground-breaking business models. Taking into account such scientific areas, Michele is currently involved in a number of international research projects, developed both in private and public sectors (mainly funded by the European Commission). In addition, he is regularly invited as speaker in international events and professional courses.

Dr. [Enrico Ferro](#) is the Head of the Innovation Development Area at Istituto Superiore Mario Boella; he also covers an Adjunct Professor position at the Polytechnic of Turin and at the International Labour Organisation of the United Nations. His research work is aimed at supporting both policy makers and managers in using ICTs as leverage to favour sustainable socio-economic development and competitiveness. The core competence of the research team he supervises consists in the design and the evaluation of both public policies and business models in the ICT context. Over the years, Dr. Ferro has worked in many projects financed by the European Commission and published over 40 academic publications.

In 2010 Dr. Ferro and Dr. Osella conducted a seminal international study on emerging business models in PSI re-use (a.k.a. #PSI4Profit) thanks to a public grant issued by Piedmont's Regional Government (Italy). Among the numerous findings ([summary](#)) generated by this exploratory research work, the prominent ones are a novel framework for the classification of business models adopted by data-intensive ventures, the identification of archetypal actors operating in the PSI-centric value ecosystem and the formalization of implemented business models. The results of the study were presented in two workshops organized by W3C in [Brussels](#) and in [London](#), generated a dozen of invited talks in international events (including the "ICT Days" organized by [EIT](#)'s co-location center in Trento), and received world-wide media coverage via [O'Reilly Radar](#). At national level, instead, the authors of the study were invited to edit a chapter on the socio-economic impact of Linked Open Data in the [white book](#) issued by the National Italian Agency for Digitalization (Agenzia per l'Italia Digitale).

More recently, Dr. Ferro and Dr. Osella have been in charge – as consultants – of defining the exploitation strategy of [Open-DAI](#) project, funded by the European Commission under the ICT Policy Support Programme as part of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP). Some of the resulting findings have been documented in a [scientific article](#) presented at CeDEM14 Conference which was granted a '[Best Paper Award](#)' by an international independent panel of experts.