Share-PSI 2.0

The network for innovation in European public sector information

Krems Workshop: A self sustaining business model for open data

AN ONGOING OPEN DIALOG IN AN OPEN DATA ECOSYSTEM

1 OUTLINE OF THE BEST PRACTICE

The Flemish government in Belgium has in the last four years taken giant steps towards freeing up its public data with the aim of making it available for everyone to access this data and information, for personal as well as for business use. This government, as a first initiative, established and implemented various initiatives, made sure that the necessary criteria and instruments were in place towards the facilitation and implementation of open data; on a strategic level, with regards to content, together with the necessary legal and technical requirements.

The uptake of governmental data was however not what the government of Flanders expected it to be. Simply making data available to the public isn't enough to make that data useful. Citizens are not interested in data, they are interested in services being built with the available data and information.

A second action in 2014 was to invite and consult SME's, developers and other interested parties using the data and information to, amongst other things, build applications. We asked them to tell us what the problems and challenges were with regards to the re-use of this data. Those issues were taken on board, defined in a working document and communicated to the relevant partners and entities. The open data action plan was adapted to make sure those issues were understood by all.

The third action "2015" will be to involve all parties (citizens, interest groups, application developers and providers, civil servants, etc..) in ongoing discussions on the added value of opening up data one the one hand, and understanding responding business models and related challenges on the other hand.

2 MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

2.1 CHALLENGE

The government of Flanders in Belgium has been on the go with the open data concept for the last 4 years. Having established at first the necessary framework, a top-down approach, proved to be the right choice. The necessary criteria and instruments to allow the Flemish administrations to get going with open data, from the necessary legislation to the implementation of an open data portal, were defined and realised. Flanders followed here the good examples of the United Kingdom and the United States.

The open data landscape however consists of different actors/users with different needs and expectations and different roles and opportunities. Together with other governments in the European Union, this government was convinced that opening up their data and information, together with answering the legal and technical demands, would result in real changes in innovation, business, and daily life. This government was also convinced that giving access to these resources would almost overnight give companies the necessary tools to offer a wide range of customer services through all sorts of channels and would see new business models and ventures and solve all kinds of challenges our society is facing. That obviously didn't happen.

Important to consider however is a recent study by the Economist Intelligent Unit. It revealed that 70% of the companies analysed collect open data (from governmental datasets but also from other sources). Open data is also the second most important type of data that executives see as the most valuable for deciding on changes of strategy or developing new strategies.

The main challenges are:

- The demand side need to be involved;
- Data in itself doesn't generate new and innovate services;
- Open data is also not just a matter of small and entrepreneurial companies;
- Business models that may help realising and extracting value from open data are not well understood and need to be explored;
- A top down approach on its own didn't bring the hoped for results.

2.2 SOLUTION

The government followed at first a top-down approach, i.e. establishing a framework into its strategic-, content-, legal- and technical sub-systems .
The top-down approach, followed by the Flemish government in Belgium, needs to be followed up by a bottom-up initiative, i.e. finding out what the priorities and issues are at ground level.
Doing this, we needed to keep in mind that:

- Open data is also more than government data, the private sector is also a big generator of open data;
- Governmental organisations need to understand the value and benefits of releasing their data and information;
- Executives need to understand the value and benefits of releasing their data and information;
- We need to understand added value from the perspective of small and also larger companies;
- We need to understand how models apply to different users and actors involved in the process;
- We need to involve all parties in order to be able to understand the added value for all;
- We need an ongoing discussion and debate between all parties involved as to understand each other needs, wants and challenges, an ecosystem in other words that enables all involved to engage with each other.

3 BEST PRACTICE IDENTIFICATION

- **Name of the Best Practice: An ongoing open dialog in an open data ecosystem;**
- Type of customer: all EU member states;
- Evolution: the practice is the result of an ongoing evolution and the continuation of previous initiatives.

3.1 WHY IS THIS A BEST PRACTICE? WHAT'S THE IMPACT OF THE BEST PRACTICE?

Most open data initiatives in most EU member states have focused on making sure everything is in place on the supply side of opening up their data and information. For governments hoping to adopt open data in both policy and in practice, simply making data available to the public isn't enough to make that data useful. Open data needs to also pay attention to the administration releasing it, the kind of data being released and, perhaps most importantly, its targeted audience.

Focusing on bringing about the necessary strategic, legal and technical aspects with regards to the implementation of open data isn't enough. Initiating an open and constructive dialog could be the beginning of an open data ecosystem, giving rise to sustainable business models of solutions making use of Public Sector Information, hopefully in combination with data and information from the private sector.

Mostly forgotten, but not less important; the best practice will also achieve efficiency gains through sharing data inside and between public administration, fostering participation of citizens in political and social life and increasing transparency of government.

This Best practice is directly related to PSI Directive criteria:

- Open Data platform(s);

- Organisational structures and skills;
- Encouraging (commercial) re-use;
- Selection of information/data to be published according to various criteria;
- Data discoverability.

3.2 WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR THIS BEST PRACTICE?

Despite all efforts made by the different member states, the uptake of open data by businesses is not what was expected. Business people need to be made aware of the added value of open data and Public Sector Information. In order for these open data efforts to be seen as necessary, and with added economic and social value, more has to been done with regards to encouraging business people to realise services that make use of data and information from governmental and other sources.

Establishing an open data ecosystem will entice all involved to work for a common cause, the significant potential public data has for re-use in new products and services and addressing societal challenges – having more data openly available helping all to discover new and innovative solutions and services. The Best Practice will encourage member states to implement the submitted Best Practice and improve on it.

4 WHAT DO YOU NEED FOR THIS BEST PRACTICE?

If member states want to adopt this Best Practice they will have to:

- Make sure everything is in place to facilitate the implementation of open data (strategy, content, legal and technical);
- Be willing to adopt a bottom-up approach to implement an open data program;
- Bring about an open data ecosystem by listening to all stakeholders and interested parties;
- Dedicate the necessary people and resources in realising this ecosystem;
- Be willing to share data inside and between public administrations;
- Establish the necessary follow-up procedures towards continuity.

5 APPLICABILITY BY OTHER MEMBER STATES?

Yes

6 CONTACT INFO - RECORD OF THE PERSON TO BE CONTACTED FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR ADVICE.

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