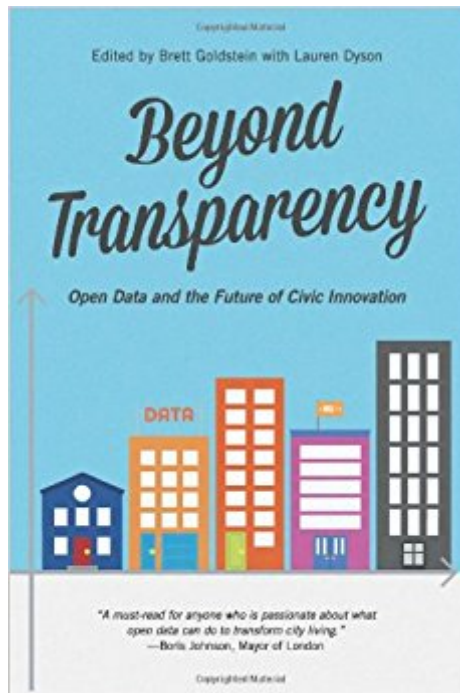


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Beyond Transparency: Open Data And The Future Of Civic Innovation



Synopsis

The rise of open data in the public sector has sparked innovation, driven efficiency, and fueled economic development. While still emerging, we are seeing evidence of the transformative potential of open data in shaping the future of our civic life, and the opportunity to use open data to reimagine the relationship between residents and government, especially at the local level. As we look ahead, what have we learned so far from open data in practice and how we can apply those lessons to realize a more promising future for America's cities and communities? Edited by Brett Goldstein, former Chief Data Officer for the City of Chicago, with Code for America, this book features essays from over twenty of the world's leading experts in a first-of-its-kind instructive anthology about how open data is changing the face of our public institutions. Contributors include: Michael Flowers, Chief Analytics Officer, New York City Beth Blauer, former director of Maryland StateStat Jonathan Feldman, CIO, City of Asheville Tim O'Reilly, founder & CEO, O'Reilly Media Eric Gordon, Director of Engagement Game Lab, Emerson College Beth Niblock, CIO, Louisville Metro Government Ryan & Mike Alfred, Co-Founders, Brightscope Emer Coleman, former director of the London Datastore Mark Headd, Chief Data Officer, City of Philadelphia

As an essential volume for anyone interested in the future of governance, urban policy, design, data-driven policymaking, journalism, or civic engagement, "Beyond Transparency" combines the inspirational glow and political grit of Profiles in Courage with the clarity of an engineer's calm explanation of how something technical actually works. Here are the detailed how-to stories of many members of the first generation of open government pioneers, written in a generous, accessible style; this compilation presents us with a great deal to admire, ample provocation, and wise guidance from a group of remarkable individuals.

"Susan Crawford, author of Captive Audience

Just as he did during his time in my administration, Goldstein has brought together industry leaders to discuss issues of relevance in the open data movement and the practical implications of implementing these policies | This book will help continue the work to make open government a reality across the country.

" Mayor Rahm Emanuel, City of Chicago

A must-read for anyone who is passionate about what open data can do to transform city living.

" Boris Johnson, Mayor of London

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Customer Reviews

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Beyond Transparency is an invaluable overview of how open data enables the free flow of information. This collection of stories from the field illustrates how technology and collaboration can support transparency and help communities transform ideas into actions.” Alberto Ibarg n, president and CEO of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Brett Goldstein is the former Chief Data and Information Officer for the City of Chicago. In 2013, he was named the inaugural recipient of the Fellowship in Urban Science at the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy. Before his appointment as Chicago’s first Chief Data Officer, he founded the Chicago Police Department Predictive Analytics Group. Previously, he spent seven years in the startup world building online real-time restaurant reservation service OpenTable. Goldstein is currently pursuing his PhD in Criminology, Law and Justice at the University of

Illinois-Chicago.

This is a superb collection of individual very short contributions. Absolutely worth reading and strongly recommended for purchase and sharing. Some take-aways: 80% of government purchasing falls below the bidding / documentation threshold Academic and Non-Profit organizations are not rushing toward Open Data Algorithmic regulation is needed (I agree, computational mathematics is out of control) Antiquated data perpetuates antiquated cultures Big Data is not really understood by the Open Data crowd Boundaries created by legacy software are dirty dirty dirty Citizen-centered design is the opposite of how we do data generally Citizen engagement is the ultimate value delivered by Open Data Citizen engagement requires education, outreach, and reinforcement Community development is a frontier waiting for Open Data to work its magic Constituent Relationship Management is now in its third generation Crowd sourcing could be the next big thing in Open Data Data conversion is a MONSTER -- especially from analog Data co-ops are emergent and inspiring Data definition matters -- confusion does arise Data-driven government is a great meme, in its infancy Data owners fight you at first, later they become your customers Data science seven stages: acquire, parse, filter, mine, represent, refine, interact Data visualization helps avoid "lost in translation" issues Education and training in Open Data are in short supply for the mass of potential government employees Enlightened government officials can be found...but not easily Feed speeds suck and excess processing capacity is hard to find FOIA is a very powerful tool (I would add -- and EPIC knows how to do this) Google is grossly over-valued by these folks (Google does the surface web (2% of the deep web)) "Government as a platform" is cute but disconnected from reality -- 90% of the data is outside government Humans matter -- get to the humans behind the data if you really want to get it right Inclusive engagement has not made the leap to inclusive capitalism Intelligence (as decision-support) is not fully understood by the "data-driven" crowd Investments still powered by elites and institutions instead of people or their ecosystems IT professionals (old guard) consider citizens to be alien creatures Journalists still do not have a means of sharing information across all boundaries Legacy data comes with very big warts Local ecosystems can be magical Local scale is not to be ignored -- seize the opportunity Mobile applications take Open Data up an order of magnitude Open Data analytics are in their infancy (to which I would add, lacking 360 degree factoring and true cost economics) Open Data can potentially overturn decades of burdensome regulations many of which make no sense at all Open Data can save tons of taxpayer money -- if government agencies would share with one another Open Data changes the narrative on all fronts (citizen, employees, media, small business) Open Data

collaboration across boundaries (e.g. inter-city) has a multiplier effect
Open Data creates economic value
Open Data inspires innovation -- its greatest value is in savings not necessarily in transparency
Open Data is (or at least should be) a public good, a common good
Open Data leads to continuous improvement
Open Data saves tons of government employee time and taxpayer dollars
Open Data usually means open records -- capturing open data points on the fly is in its infancy
Open Data without Open Geospatial is not working at its fullest potential
Open Design is essential to the future of Open Data
Open Government is nowhere near synonymous with Open Democracy
Organizational changes wreak havoc on data bases
Performance management demands that you measure the right things (to which I would add, add true costs)
Philanthropy is main funding source now -- ROI for Open Data not yet understood by Capital
Privacy matters -- this impacts on level of detail and visualization
Scaling requires standards
Shared data does not automatically come with shared knowledge
Transparency builds trust -- trust is rapidly declining in the Internet era
True costs are hard to find and scattered among analog, digital, and undisclosed records
Total costs due not include true costs (ecological, social) unless you plan for same
Updating can be a nightmare
As I finish reading the book I am even more annoyed by the lack of an index -- I would go so far as to say that in addition to the index there should be a special listing of key personalities (pioneers), companies, and softwares cited throughout the book. Lazy makes me crazy. The book should be redone to include an index, the guide, and a consolidated bibliography.
Excellent concluding quote from Alec J. Ross: "The principle binary struggle of the 21st century is not left or right but open societies versus closed." This quote could be adapted to change open to open/horizontal versus closed/hierarchical.
I have taken away one star for two reasons: there is no index (for example, I cannot look up every reference to geospatial or visualization) and there is no consolidated bibliography -- the team publishing this book has been lazy; and there is no larger understanding communicated with respect to the fact that Open Data alone withers outside an open source ecology that must include at a minimum OpenCloud, Open Hardware, Open Software, and Open Spectrum.
Put another way, the authors are enthralled--and rightly so--with what happens when Open Data leads to startling efficiencies, insights, new collaboration relationships, and so on. What they do not get is what the governments of China, India, and Norway, among others, have gotten: citizens should not have to buy proprietary software (e.g. Microsoft) in order to read public data.
See my graphic on a selection of opens comprising the open source ecology we need -- opens that do not hang together will hang separately -- and see also the tiny url /OSE-2014 for the latest on the Open Source Everything meme.
Other books I have reviewed with Open in the title:
Open Space Technology: A User's Guide
The World Is Open: How Web Technology Is Revolutionizing

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Great concept of putting together innovative/forward thinking state/city government workers to discuss data transparency. An added bonus for me was the chapter about Louisville, Kentucky. People outside of our city typically write off our innovations before ever really taking the time to investigate our accomplishments because they are not even sure if we wear shoes! The truth is we have one of the most innovative/open city web sites in the United States. Louisville is still somewhat of a hidden gem. Our current mayor (Greg Fischer) has done a great job of keeping the ball moving forward for our city not only by making city data available to residents but by bringing an entrepreneurial spirit to city government.

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