



Name

Open Data for Cities (ODC)

Background

Many Cities – most notably London (<http://data.london.gov.uk/>), San Francisco (<http://www.datasf.org/>), and Portland, Oregon (<http://www.civicapps.org/>) – have started making City data online and open to the public, as have member states like the UK (<http://data.gov.uk/>). The result of this, consistent with the "MTV" principle, is that the data can be used by citizens and public or private enterprises for their own purposes -- to stimulate certain behavior, including economic, which is in the interest of the City and the city dwellers. In this way, ICT is enabling transformational change whose outcome at this point may be difficult to establish, but the bar of city dweller expectations to have access to this kind of information, as a minimum, has been raised. Direct carbon footprint data or proxy data linked to behaviour change thus managed and released to the wider public could, in addition, create spillover effects of awareness, competition and reward, which would in principle have a net positive effect on the City's climate change targets.

Concept

Cities would ensure that all data relating to public transport is available online and accessible by members of the public. This would include at a minimum timetables, fares and vehicle locations. In cases where the public transport is outsourced then such data publication would be part of the licence agreement.

An example of this has already taken place in the UK (<http://timefinder.org/>), where a graduate student has developed a web-based application showing when buses will be arriving at Manchester and London bus stops and thereby encouraging more people to take public transport.

The screenshot shows two web pages. The top page is 'Where's My Villo?' from London.gov.uk, which provides information about bike-sharing stations and parking availability. It includes sections for 'ABOUT', 'HELP', and 'SHARE', along with a 'REPORT' button. Below, it lists 'WORST BIKE STATIONS' and 'WORST PARKING STATIONS' with corresponding maps and data tables. The bottom page is a 'TfL Cycle Hire Mashup' from the London Datastore, featuring a map of London with blue markers indicating bike hire locations and a sidebar with navigation options like 'Search Datasets' and 'Request Dataset'.



Future Potential

Remote Infrastructure Repair/Vandalism Reporting: Managing city "obligations" by phone and/or smartphone image upload could have net advantages for the environment as positive behavior transformation enabled by ICT.

Mandatory Monthly Remote Meter Reading: Instead of relying on widespread deployment of installed smart meters, citizens can already remotely share and exchange data on their monthly household energy usage via existing technology, e.g. phone and/or smartphone image upload. This decreases energy-intensive activity related to onsite information collection by the utility company, and increases user awareness about consumption, while stimulating development of mechanisms for processing, reusing and making data available, which could reinforce positive behavior.

Transport Tracking with Remote Devices: No matter how environmentally friendly, public transport is not an appealing option to city dwellers if it is not reliable and safe as well. Equipping drivers, conductors and engineers with a mobile phone or smartphone with gps-tracking capability can contribute to both of these objectives.

Online/Remote Certified Post Tracking: As a means to decrease carbon-intensive activity on the part of the post and recipients of certified/registered mail, an approach for remotely tracking, and even signing/approving certified post delivery, would be beneficial. This can be linked to digital certificates/signatures on national ID cards and/or via online identity management schemes via local or national authorities.

Existing Elements

Data for cities exists in various forms throughout the city environment – in the public domain, in the hands of private organizations and individuals, and held by semi-private, NGO or other groups or communities. The challenge for this initiative is to identify the most “valuable” data (i.e. that which can be used as information or “intelligence”) and make it available to individuals and communities who can benefit from possessing that information.

In a vacuum, citizen groups may seek to collect and distribute their own information, i.e. engage in some level of so-called civic “hacktivism,” about city services. For a great example of this where a Brussels eco-initiative is concerned, please see the “Where’s my Villo” website at <http://www.wheresmyvillo.be>

All the City2020 proposed initiatives have to pass the test of being deployable today, if not yesterday, via technology which exists and/or infrastructures which are already in place. Besides the mentioned smart-card and mobile-/smartphone technology, GDC initiatives could be deployed on the internet, or by using GPS, GSM and user-sourced applications for these same, or other, devices. Key to deciding the medium for the interface to the ultimate technology-user is how well the solution meets the MTV plus engagement criteria.