

Local Government Open Data Breakthrough Projects

Evaluation Report 2013/14

Project title: Open data index and data inventory schema

Lead organisation: Peterborough City Council

Submission date: 30 June 2014

Type of project: Standards and tools for release and discovery of local open data

Total grant: £97,000

Summary of the project

The project has:

- developed and published a schema for inventories of open datasets
- overseen and tested implementation of the inventory in DataShare
- engaged with other local data providers wishing to use the inventory
- published a tool for upload/download and validation of inventories in XML and CSV format
- consulted and supported data.gov.uk who have implemented a harvester from the inventory format (currently in beta)
- indexed the content of published inventories for look-up against standard Services List and Functions List
- produced a report on the burdens and benefits for councils publishing open data
- implemented a copy of DataShare for Peterborough
- published twelve Peterborough open dataset responses to Freedom of Information questions via Datashare with schemas available for import by other DataShare users
- set up mechanisms for ongoing publishing of data via DataShare and collaboration with Hounslow and other DataShare adopters

Challenge/opportunity:

The project was set up to provide means of councils seeing what one another are publishing as open data and sharing formats where desirable. The techniques applied allow all consumers of data to identify datasets on common themes and ones of the same formats.

The opportunity is to increase consistency across local government and make it easier for SMEs and others to aggregate datasets from multiple councils.

Use of the inventory format by councils means their datasets can be automatically harvested by data.gov.uk rather than councils having to continually make manual updates to data.gov.uk entries.

Data published and uses:

Peterborough chaired an esd-toolkit programme Information Management Working Group event in October 2013 to discuss and design the outputs. Detailed consultation via meetings and online hangouts were held with data.gov.uk, LeGSB and Redbridge council from November 2013. Outputs have been presented at LGA Transparency events around the country. In total these have involved approximately 150 people from 100 councils.

Online communication and mail shots have reached more councils. The inventory schema has been discussed with CKAN and DKAN developers.

The datasets which have been published are datasets that have been provided to members of the public in response to Freedom of Information requests :

- Animals frozen, including the type and quantity of each animal
- Discretionary Housing Payments
- Firework licence-registration holders - type 3 and 4 explosives
- Hereditament properties
- Information regarding spending and contracts regarding older person's social services
- Mobile catering vans
- Numbers of pupils on roll at each primary and secondary school by year

- Pet Shops licensed under the Pet Animals Act 1951
- Primary school places, schools oversubscribed and percentages of preferences met
- Proportion of new social and affordable housing allocations awarded by nationality
- Schools over-subscribed and last child in

The project is just completed and datasets recently published so at this stage downloads have been minimal.

The inventory format is adopted by all councils adopting DataShare version 1.14, as given [here](#).

User types are:

- Application developers wishing to aggregate council datasets of like formats
- Other councils sharing and learning from one another's open data and their formats
- Enquirers of local data in data.gov.uk and any other indexes importing inventories
- Members of the public asking the same or similar Freedom of Information questions

Approach to publishing data

The data is published via DataShare with each dataset indexed against the standard Services and Functions List. Members of the public can access the data by referral, via links in responses to Freedom of Information requests, or by searching on data.peterborough.gov.uk or data.gov.uk. Council users wishing to use the inventory tool can access the inventory schema [here](#). data.gov.uk harvesting will expose the data as soon as the beta testing is complete. The inventory schema and standards work continues to be promoted through the use LG Inform Open Data information forums and has been promoted through events hosted by the LGA.

The Datashare software makes it easy to download and manipulate the datasets and once the standards are defined and adopted the aggregation of data at a local and national level can be performed.

esd-toolkit Services and Functions Lists metadata allows councils and data users to group all open data against the same services and functions. This will continue as councils publish according to the inventory schema and access will be monitored.

The mechanisms put in place by the project will continue as routine practice from now by virtue of being built into DataShare and ESD web pages. Live launch of data.gov.uk harvesting and anticipated wider use of the inventory by other publishing tools will increase take-up.

Benefits and impact

At this stage it is difficult to evaluate all the benefits, however, the process of publishing data to data.gov.uk will be automated in due course and for councils using the Datashare system this will reduce the burden of publishing manually.

The mechanisms in place will also make it far easier to achieve consistency and data sharing across councils. We expect this to be evidenced soon after the DCLG Transparency Code requirements come into force and will be in a better position to report impact in six to twelve months.

Further information:

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Peterborough data: <http://data.peterborough.gov.uk/>

Inventory details: <http://inventories.opendata.esd.org.uk/>