

Being aware of all Open PSI Stakeholders

Submitted on 20 Apr 2010 by Ton Zijlstra

As described in the previous posting Open Government Data in the Netherlands is recognized as important by a growing group of people, and awareness is rising. There is no general policy however to make sure that the law is executed in a pro-active fashion. There is also no political pressure at all to move towards more pro-actively publishing PSI, and certainly not in ways that make PSI machine readable and reusable.

This leads to a fragmented situation, with some institutions doing lots of things to open up PSI, others doing nothing unless forced to. In absence of a driving force in government, it seems important to connect the people who work on open PSI so they may build momentum together. This means not only connecting civil servants who are change agents in their respective branches of government, but also making sure people are involved from all areas that are likely to benefit from more open PSI.

From my experience in different settings and discussions on open PSI, it is very easy to forget to take some groups of stakeholders into account. I've been in several discussions on the potential economic value to be derived from open PSI, where the focus was only on existing market players, and the notion that new people could create new economic activity altogether never came up. So it's easy to have some blind spots, and it's why I try to keep track of the list of things open PSI might be beneficial for. That way it becomes easier to keep track of the type of stakeholders we must try and involve in the discussion.

Some of those areas are:

- Transparency (of government processes and our democracy), connected to civil servants, activists, ngo's, MPs and journalists)
- Impact measurement of policies, connected to civil servants, journalists, businesses, local governments, citizens involved in these policies etc.
- Participation (by doing/creating apps, not just by talking), connected citizens, activists, organizations.
- Empowerment, connected citizens (by using information to make better choices)
- New knowledge and insights (by connecting data as more data is different), connected to data specialists, semantic web, academic community
- New economic activity, connected to existing companies and entrepreneurs, as well as new entrepreneurs and individual coders/programmers
- Real innovation (things we can't foresee), connected to groups of 'tinkerers' and coders, as well as individual citizens
- Internal efficiency (exchange of PSI between parts of government, speeding up internal processes, better information sharing), connected to civil servants and the government institutes they work in.
- Internal effectively (gaining more insight into the workings of government as a whole, in stead of just for your part of it), connected to civil servants and the government institutes they work in.
- Better public service, and new public services, connected to citizens.

I am sure there are more items to add to this list, as well as groups of people I have not mentioned. The main point for me, however, is to think of open PSI as a general resource, as a type of data-infrastructure even. That way we can check ourselves every time we find ourselves talking

about just one specific use case or one specific stakeholder. It is important to keep an open eye to all the different use cases and stakeholders involved to be able to realize the full potential of open PSI. In a next posting the 'business case' for open PSI will be discussed in more detail.