

The social value of public sector information

Submitted on 08 Apr 2010 by

Public Administrations and public sector bodies generate, collect and process a large amount of information that can be re-used for commercial or non commercial purposes.

The private sector can make use of this opportunity to generate benefits by creating new value-added services and products based on public sector information. In this same way, citizens and not-for-profit organizations can re-use public sector information and design new services and applications for their specific needs and interests.

In addition, the re-use of public sector information offers the citizenship the chance to improve their level of information and knowledge on public institutions' activities, turning them into more transparent and accessible institutions.

In this context, in recent years a new culture of re-use is growing increasingly stronger and has led to the birth and consolidation of civil society platforms that are tapping the social value potential of public sector information.

As good examples of these civil society platforms, we may mention, inter alia, projects like "[MySociety.org](#)" in the United Kingdom, the German association "[OpenData Network](#)", France's "[Libertic](#)" or, in Spain, the Association for the Promotion and Dissemination of Public Resources "[Pro Bono Publico](#)", whose main objective is the promotion of PSI re-use benefits.

Pro Bono Publico is taking different innovative actions and, in a very short time, has contributed to an increased interest on PSI re-use in social networks like Twitter. Among these activities the parlio.org initiative is worth a special mention – it consists in a free software tool that develops applications based on information from the Basque Parliament. Another Pro Bono initiative is the competition "AbreDatos Challenge 2010", in which participants compete to design the best citizen service based on PSI in a maximum time of 48 hours. During the 17th and 18th April, contest participants, grouped into teams of up to four people, will need all their inventiveness to develop an application based on PSI reuse.

In short: citizens' initiatives such as Pro Bono, whose aim is to promote the culture of openness and re-use of public sector information, play an essential role in raising the awareness of citizens, private sector and public administrations regarding the benefits of PSI reuse in Spain.