

The Way to the Vienna Open Data Portal, a Community Perspective

Submitted on 27 Jun 2011 by

On 17 May 2011 the time has come - the first Open Government Data (OGD) portal of a public administration in Austria was launched - and it was the capital Vienna that did this courageous and so important step in Austria and thereby took the role of a pioneer in the area of open data in our country - and hopefully will act as a model for communities, cities, states and the federal government (also important to mention here is that the [Open Commons Region Linz](#) has been the first city government that has announced a data portal in Austria still before Vienna - launch date will be September 2011).

<http://data.wien.gv.at> is a first well done step in the area of Open Government Data for a modern and open City of Vienna. Open human- and machine readable data in several formats and from several categories (e.g. population, education, budget, leisure time and many more) are available for re-use now. Into the bargain available under the [CC-BY-3.0](#) License of [Creative Commons](#).

The road to 17 of May 2011 has started about 1 year earlier - at least from the pointview of the Austrian (and Viennese) open data community: on the 8th of April 2010 a group of linked open data enthusiasts - representatives of universities, companies and the civil society - invited interested people to the 1st [Open Government Data Meetup](#) at the [OCG](#) (Austrian Computer Society) in Vienna. For talks there were [Rufus Pollock](#) of the [Open Knowledge Foundation](#) on site in Vienna as well as [Stefano Bertolo](#) of the European Commission has been hooked up via skype to shine a light on this - at this time - for Austria and Vienna very new topic of Open Government Data to present their experiences and best practises in the field to about 60 participants. The interest was very high - also on the side of the media - and therefore a basic interest as well as a first broad information in Vienna was built.

Afterwards everything went quickly until the 17th of May 2011 (and also if one year seems to be a long time I do think that it was an enormous performance of all involved parties to manage so much in only one year!) - after the mentioned Meetup the [OGD Austria](#) was founded - an initiative that's objective is to open (linked) government data (non personal) in Austria in human- and machine readable formats for re-use. To do this together with politics, administration, civil society and industry. Other initiatives as [open3](#) as well as established institutions in the area of administration research as [KDZ - Zentrum für Verwaltungsforschung](#) or the [Danube University of Krems](#) or [Joanneum Research](#) - but also companies as the [Semantic Web Company](#) or [Compass Verlag](#), and above all lots of representatives of the civil society who were interested in the topic of Open Government Data (it is important to say that in Vienna we do have a very active creative scene and web 2.0 community) did work together to push the field of open data in Vienna / Austria.

In June 2010 the [Semantic Web Company \(SWC\)](#) - with support from above mentioned institutions - submitted a proposal to the technology agency of the City of Vienna ([ZIT](#)) to build and implement a bundle of measures for awareness-building activities in the field of Open Government Data in Austria - the project: OGD2011 was born. The authorisation of this project (partly funded by ZIT) for sure helped a lot to inform the relevant stakeholders (politics, public administration, civil society, industry, academia and media) in the mentioned time period and to build awareness about the power, the potentials as well as about the challenges - and the important concrete steps - of Open Government Data!

The following measures were implemented and will be implemented in the course of OGD2011:

- Open [OGD Austria Stammtisch](#) all 2 months (meetup, until today only in Vienna)
- [4 Stakeholder Workshops](#) (politics, administration, civil society, industry) in February 2011 to evaluate and identify as well as to discuss the requirements on Open Government Data in Austria from the viewpoint of the respective stakeholder group
- Publishing of the [OGD Digest Austria](#) - Information around Open Data in Austria and international in print & PDF (until today 4 editions available)
- Set Up and operation of a mailing list as well as a [Xing group](#)
- Organisation of an [open MeetUp on OGD](#) on 15th of Juni 2011 in Vienna
- Set up and operation of [open wiki spaces](#) for collection of information and provision of relevant information in the field of Open Data
- [OGD2011 Conference](#) on 16th of Juni 2011 in Vienna
- And very important; about 40-50 bilateral talks with representatives of politicians and public administration in Vienna about OGD to raise awareness and clarify misconceptions
- Networking with international initiatives on the topic of open data as the [Open Data Network](#) (Germany), the [Open Knowledge Foundation](#) (UK) or the [ePSIplattform](#) (just to name a few) to ensure continuous exchange on the topic - as well contentwise as about the process for an Open Government Data strategy - to learn from each other and to support each other...
- Furthermore in July/August 2011 the Open Government Data White Book Austria will be published as a fundamental work on open data in Austria

In spite the OGD2011 project is arranged for the whole country of Austria the participants at the workshops and events were mainly from Vienna - what is not really surprising as most of the Austrian public bodies are located in Vienna and the City and the State of Vienna has a special status in Austria.

In November 2010 another very important step happened without a Open Government Data strategy is nearly impossible to be implemented - the political YES to Open Data in Vienna in the programme of the government of the new red-green coalition.

Regarding the implementation of [data.wien.gv.at](#) the City of Vienna received support by the [EU project LOD2](#) - LOD2 did consulting on the following topics: Open (Government) Data, Linked Open Data, licenses and business models, as well as in the area of data sheets, meta data and URL schemas in the course of the [LOD2 Publink Consultancy Services](#).

I think that in total the following indicators were crucial for the success of the Open Government Data movement in Vienna so far:

- Broad awareness raising at all involved stakeholder groups
- Collaboration of all stakeholders and establishing of an open dialogue between these groups
- Political commitment on the highest level
- High interest as well as engagement on the side of the public administration at the City of Vienna
- High interest and support by the media - most of all by the [Open Data Blog of futurezone](#)
- Support of the OGD2011 project by ZIT to enable a basic funding for concrete activities and measures
- Building of a strong community for Open Data and therefore permanent presence of the topic in the public
- Evaluation and representation of potentials and opportunities - but also of existing risks - of Open Government Data in Vienna
- Exchange of knowledge and experiences with international initiatives to learn from each other and use best practises vice versa

- Intense analysis of: licenses, meta data, data description (data governance) and a very well done implementation of phase 1 of data.wien.gv.at by the City of Vienna (with support by LOD2 et al.)

Both this phase one of data.wien.gv.at can only be a start - the City of Vienna already announced continuous exchange between the public administration and the community for further development of the data portal (and today on 26th of May 2011 we had the first meeting with about 50 participants and really very fine discussions about 2 hours long). Further an online survey is planned for summer 2011 (to ask the public for concrete data needs) and an open data challenge is planned for the end of 2011 on the basis of Viennese Open Government Data - and there will also happen something in the area of the scope of the provided data sets (more data will be opened) as well as in the area of the provision of additional data formats and interfaces (along the lines of the EC and UK the City of Vienna wants to follow the path of Linked Open Government Data)....

... I am absolutely curious about how the process of Open Government Data in Vienna will go on from here in 2011 and 2012!