

Unused buildings and Open Data in Bologna: the need for a shared vision

Submitted on 29 Jul 2013 by Matteo Brunati



[Recently the municipality of Bologna](#) has released an [app](#) to visualize Open Data datasets related to the council's real estate property which is unused.

[In the map](#), people may consult three kinds of properties: unused buildings (i.e. those that don't satisfy legal requirements, are impracticable or are not large enough for public use), commercial buildings (with position and description) or buildings of value (with expected council's interventions). The viewers can also suggest their own ideas for the possible usage of these buildings directly to the municipality, using this email address: spazi@comune.bologna.it

Data used is available on dati.comune.bologna.it, the official Bologna Data portal. (*three datasets are involved, [one is on impracticable unused buildings](#), [one on unused buildings to value](#) and another one on [unused commercial buildings](#)*).

It's an important effort to make people more self-conscious about their own place and their own city. But there is a risk: there is a lot of fragmentation of efforts and initiatives. We, as Italians, already know it: it's a typical Italian issue.

Next step? Finding synergies with other similar projects, and the need for a shared vision

Map 4 Emilia | Mappare per Riqualificare

Mappatura Wiki degli edifici inutilizzati in Emilia Romagna per la riqualificazione del patrimonio esistente.

Vuoi contribuire?

App Store | www.impossibleliving.com

Segnala via iPhone o web gli edifici inutilizzati, abbandonati, vacanti sul territorio emiliano romagnolo che incontri.

In collaborazione con:
Hubbol e Ciclostile Architettura

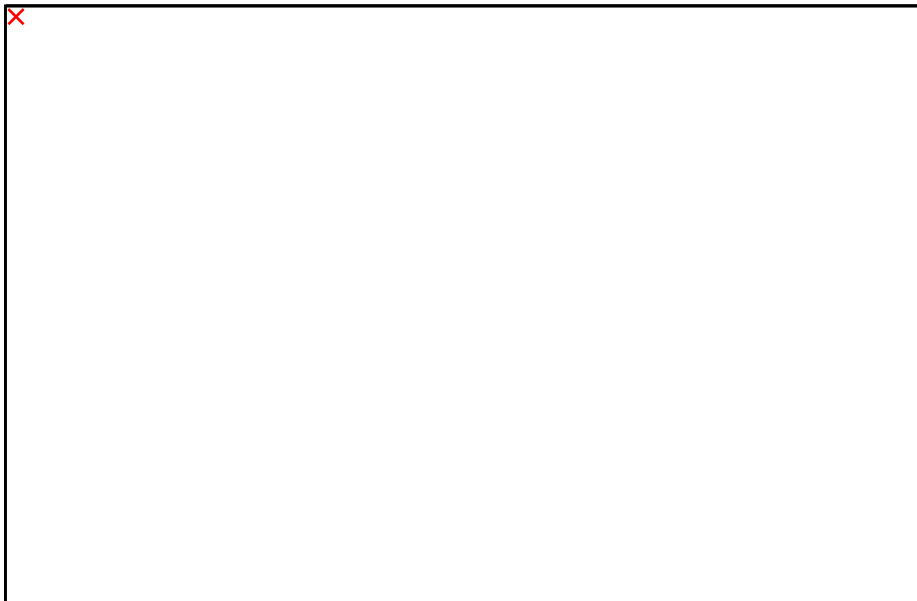
[im]possible living



It's interesting to see how previous civic projects related to unused buildings mapping have evolved. For example, [the project \[im\]possible living](#) (more [details here](#)) could make data integrations and visualizations with their data.

We remind that in this area a terrible earthquake occurred over a year ago: a lot of initiatives were created to help citizens and the local authorities to go on and to make a step forward. Also [im]possible living had contributed with the project "[Map 4 Emilia](#)", a wiki mapping initiative to collect the available buildings in Emilia-Romagna.

A unified civic effort was created with the support of several NGOs, like [ActionAID](#), [OpenPolis](#), [Wikitalia](#) (*Alberto Cottica, me and others are members of this association which promotes Open Government principles and activities in Italy*) and many others, and [OpenRicostruzione](#) was created.



The aim of the project was to collect data about impracticable buildings (*damaged by earthquakes*) and money funds to repair them, and then sharing through an open process supported by Open Data . Some of the commonly answered questions were How much money? for Which building? or public entity? Which local project? etc.

A new shared story

One thing that we can do now with official data released by Bologna, is **a better match between unused buildings and a new ways to use them to help citizens and local business, with less public money spent**. And with the data available, data journalists can tell interesting stories,.

It seems that **cooperation and data sharing are the next steps to a new integrated data ecosystem, that changes over time**. The challenge is presenting a coherent vision to the people, with **reuse as the main goal**. (*during times where spending review is a never ending story, it's important to be as simple as possible, especially in Italy*)

We need to make it more inclusive and socially accepted as a process and a shared practice, without digital divide issues or cultural ones. I think this is not only an Italian challenge.

Making it clearer and more visible thanks to a **shared story** is a start. Experiments likes [OpenRicostruzione's workshops](#) are proof that we can do better things when we start making things together, with *contaminated* experiences. Bad experiences and setbacks are not always bad: we can learn from them and take them as an excuse to make a change.

More details on the projects cited:

- an old news about Wikitalia: [The Europe Roundup: Wikitalia Foundation, Another Step to Open the Government](#)
- an insight related the born of Wikitalia - [week ahead maurizio napolitano](#) on OKFN Community notebook
- [\[im\]possibileliving.com FAQ](#)
- [About OpenPolis](#)