

# Interview with Sirko Hunnius from Open Data Monitor Project

Submitted on 17 Mar 2014 by Luis Meijueiro



On 5 March 2014 the ePSI Platform interviewed Sirko Hunnius from the [Potsdam Institute for eGovernment \(IfG.CC\)](#), in his capacity as a researcher in the [Open Data Monitor \(ODM\)](#) project. He talked about the project's research tasks carried out with [Red.es](#), one of the project's collaborating partners. Mr. Hunnius was visiting Spain to meet some open data stakeholders involved in the project. We interviewed him while he was visiting consultants at [CTIC Centro Tecnológico](#), an organisation that has been deeply involved in most Spanish open data initiatives (including [the Spanish national data hub](#)) since

2007.

Q. What is Open Data Monitor?

A. *The goal of the ODM project is to build a platform that harvests metadata from virtually all open data hubs in Europe. This includes the major national data hubs, which are often well structured, but also regional and local hubs, which usually have more peculiar characteristics.*

Q. Does the collection of data hubs include only governmental hubs?

A. *Within this project we are focused on open government data provided by public administrations. But it's a good point, because it's a discussion we have had inside the project too. If we call it Open Data Monitor rather than Open Government Data Monitor, why not include other type of data sources?.*

Q. What is Open Data Monitor's main purpose?

A. *ODM is a tool intended for people outside of government as well as for people from the public sector. ODM will allow potential open data re-users to figure out what kind of data is available and assess the quality of that data, in order to check they meet requirements. For instance, if someone wants to build an application based on data from Madrid, Paris, and Athens, it would be useful to know if the data sought is available and in a homogeneous form for all of these territories, or if in some places they can only be used under some specificity. We also assume a use case for the ODM within the public administration as a tool for comparison. Public servants could see what kind of data are being disclosed by other administrations and territories, and even see the access ratio if provided, in order to support their own position on the usefulness of disclosing similar data.*

Q. Who is behind Open Data Monitor?

A. *The ODM project is coordinated by an Austrian organisation called [SYNYO](#). It plays the role of coordinator - as specialists in the management of EU projects - and are also involved in ODM's technological development. This is mainly led by [The University of Southampton](#) and the [Athena Research and Innovation Center](#), who do the programming. The role of the Potsdam Institute for eGovernment has a more socio-scientific approach. For example, we look at the stakeholder requirements, the different perceptions and processes around open data and build the use cases. In addition, the [Open Data Institute \(ODI\)](#) in London is partner in the project, in particular to reach out to the community. [Red.es](#) and the [City of Munich](#) are the practice partners.*

Q. How will Open Data Monitor accomplish its objectives?

A. *We are currently interviewing people from public administrations in Munich and Spain, to get a*

*better understanding of how the data is generated and published in public administration. We want to know what different actors' perspectives on the topic are: what are their vested interests, why they might be more hesitant or more willing to publish data, who's involved in the process of cleaning the data, structuring it, or adding metadata, so that we can know what's really happening inside public administration. We have also interviewed people from outside public administration: re-users, application providers and independent developers, and also big corporations that use open data, and what we call 'intermediaries' or support groups involved in open data projects by advising or pushing public administrations on the topic. So we try to look at the whole 'ecology' of open data. Some of the technical development has just started, but it is still related to the basic architecture of the system. The rest of the technical development is pending and will be shaped based on the results of the interviews, as we will not know how large the problem we will face with the database is until we assess the metadata that are available.*

Q. What are the deliverables of this project?

*A. Apart from the tool, the project aims to deliver components that shed more light on the developing community and the available hubs, the contained data and the metadata. One of the most important, that can be considered the basis, is the stakeholder's analysis. We have also the collection of the open data hubs, which is built on existing lists that are already in circulation within the community, or lists from other EU projects, and that we will try to complement by our own desk research. The whole list of deliverables is on the project website [project.opendatamonitor.eu](http://project.opendatamonitor.eu)*

Q. When will be the tools and other resources available?

*A. This is a two year long project, and a first demonstrator of the tool will be deployed by the end of this year. The first iteration of the stakeholder's report will be published by the end of June. On the basis of this qualitative research a quantitative survey will follow in the summer, which will then be published early next year in a second iteration of the stakeholder's report, which will not only look at the partners we have in the project, but look at a broader picture in Europe.*

Q. How can the Open Data community collaborate and benefit from the project outcomes?

*A. For us the community aspect is very important. We will introduce the ODM project at the European Data Forum and we will try to get some ideas of what the community would expect from this kind of tool. At this stage of the project I am not really sure how our technical partners will actively involve third parties in some aspects of development, but I can say that all developed components and plugins will be provided under open licenses, and all open source components and plugins produced by the OpenDataMonitor consortium will be published on publicly available software repositories such as [GitHub](https://github.com) or [OSOReu](https://osoreu.com).*