Ministerial Open Data Application Wins Czech Open Data Challenge

Submitted on 14 Dec 2015 by Michal Kuban

A week ago, the winners of the third annual Open Data Challenge "Together We Open Data" were announced with very encouraging results.

This year the competition received 27 submitted applications based on open data, which used data from a variety of topics, including transparency, transport, environment, public sector and finance. State Institutions created three applications, i.e. two applications were from the Czech Ministry of Finance and one application from the Czech Telecommunication Office, which uses its own open data. You can read about all applications (in Czech) by clicking here.

The overall winner of the competition was an application called "Supervisor" (made by the Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic) which used its own open data. The application visualises information relating to invoices and public contracts from the Ministry of Finance and helps them to be scrutinized by providing them as open data.

Image: Karolína Ketmanová

The application was created by the same team that had opened-up the data from the same ministry. As one of the creators Benedikt Kotmel said, "*a year ago we were assigned to make the data from our ministry more open. Very soon we realized that not everybody understands the concept of open data. Once we had published open data in our local catalogue (in January 2015) we wanted to use this information to show its potential. Therefore, we came up with Supervisor, which helps us to*

explain the role that open data can play as a transparency tool, while also being an indicator of effective economic management by our ministry."

It's not that common for a public institution to create its own open data application. But why not? It shows its potential and its creators were well aware that they needed to work from a good quality data source and that entire datasets were accessible on the local catalogue. Furthermore, it serves as quite a convincing argument when negotiating with other departments and divisions about why they need to reconsider open data. Since we want to have more invoices and contracts in it.

Second place went to an application called Hejbrnem.cz. Through this application, residents in Brno can obtain up-to-date information regarding public transport (such as trams and buses) as well as the current state of pollution in the city.

Third place went to the Geosense Map Application, which makes it easier to manage the property of Prague District 17. The application works with a number of open datasets from the Institute of Planning and Development of the City of Prague.

The student award was given to Vojtěch Staněk from PORG School, who created the application "Polluters Under Magynifying Glass" (Znečišťovatelé pod Lupou). The app provides information about toxic pollution in various regions of the Czech Republic, using data from the Czech Ministry of the Environment.

The Open Data Challenge was organised by the non-governmental organisation the Otakar Motejl Fund - one of the leading open data NGOs in the Czech Republic. The goal of the competition was to highlight the best applications that use (solely or partially) open datasets to contribute to the improvement of digital services for society.

A special Otakar Motejl Fund Award was given to the entry that contributed to greater transparency and efficiency of public administration. The award went to the application Hlidame.ie (WeAreWatchingThem), which was created by two NGO's KohoVolit.Eu and The European Values. The application enables people to monitor the activities of Czech representatives in the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union.

The second application that used its own open data was called Radio Spectrum Utilisation. The app, created by the Czech telecommunication Office, ended up in tenth place.

Overall, the third year of the Czech Open Data Challenge was successful, because ultimately it has resulted in the development of new applications. It showed that there are growing numbers of civil servants, programmers, coders and entrepreneurs interested in open data and its potential uses.

If you want to read more of my reflections on the Czech Open Data Challenge from 2014, you can find them here.