

Experiences about opening data in private sector

I . Introduction

Open data is the idea that data should be available freely for everyone to use and republish without restrictions from copyright, patents or other mechanisms of control. The concept of open data is not new; but a formalized definition is relatively new, and The Open Definition gives full details on the requirements for open data and content as follows:

Availability and access: the data must be available as a whole with no more than a reasonable reproduction cost, preferably by downloading over the internet. The data must also be available in a convenient and modifiable form.

Reuse and redistribution: the data must be provided under terms that permit reuse and redistribution including the intermixing with other datasets. The data shall be machine-readable.

Universal participation: everyone must be able to use, reuse and redistribute the data— which by means there should be no discrimination against fields of endeavor or against persons or groups. For example, “non-commercial” restrictions that would prevent “commercial” use, or restrictions of use for certain purposes are not allowed.

In order to be in tune with international developmental trends, Taiwan passed an executive resolution in favor of promoting Open Government Data in November 2012. Through the release of government data, open data has grown significantly in Taiwan and Taiwan has come out on top among 122 countries and areas in the 2015 and 2016 Global Open Data Index^[1].

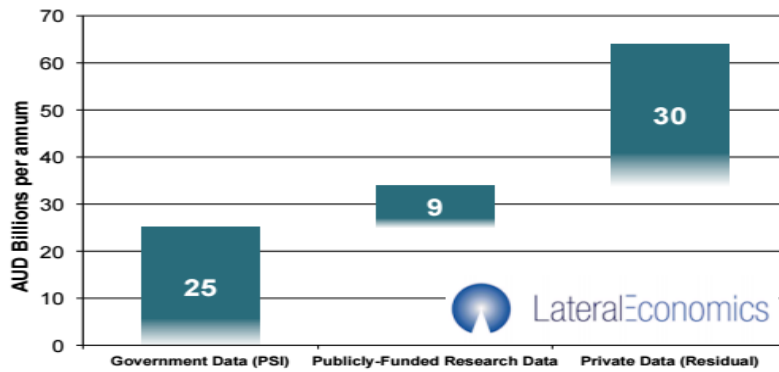
The result represented a major leap for Taiwan, however, progress is still to be made as most of the data are from the Government, and data from other territories, especially from private sector can rarely be seen. It is a pity that data from private sector has not being properly utilized and true value of such data still need to be revealed. The following research will place emphasis to enhance the value of private data and the strategies of boosting private sector to open their own data.

II . Why open private data

With the trend of Open Government Data recent years, countries are now starting to realize that Open Government Data is improving transparency, creating opportunities for social and commercial innovation, and opening the door to better engagement with citizens. But open data is not limited to Open Government Data. In fact, the private sector not only interacts with government data, but also produces a massive amount of data, much of which in need of utilized.

According to the G20 open data policy agenda made in 2014, the potential economic value of open data for Australia is up to AUD 64 billion per annum, and the potential value of open data from private sector is around AUD 34 billion per annum.

Figure 1 Value of open data for Australia (AUD billion per annum)



Source: McKinsey Global Institute

The purpose for opening data held by private entities and corporations is rooted in a broad recognition that private data has the potential to foster much public good. Openness of data for companies can translate into more efficient internal governance frameworks, enhanced feedback from workers and employees, improved traceability of supply chains, accountability to end consumers, and with better service and product delivery. Open Private Data is thus a true win-win for all with benefiting not only the governance but environmental and social gains.



At the same time, a variety of constraints, notably privacy and security, but also proprietary interests and data protectionism on the part of some companies—hold back this potential.

III . The cases of Open Private Data

Syngenta AG, a global Swiss agribusiness that produces agrochemicals and seeds, has established a solid foundation for reporting on progress that relies on independent data collection and validation, assurance by 3rd party assurance providers, and endorsement from its implementing partners. Through the website, Syngenta AG has shared their datasets for agricultural with efficiency indicators for 3600 farms for selected agro-ecological zones and market segments in 42 countries in Europe, Africa, Latin America, North America and Asia. Such datasets are precious but Syngenta AG share them for free only with a Non-Commercial license which means users may copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format freely but may not use the material for commercial purposes.

Figure 2 Description and License for Open data of Syngenta AG

Data Downloads

Description	Download files	License
<p>The Good Growth Plan Progress Data – Productivity 2014</p> <p>The dataset includes 2014 baseline data for agricultural efficiency indicators for 3600 farms for selected agro-ecological zones and market segments in 41 countries in Europe, Africa, Latin America, North America and Asia.</p> <p>Date of first publication: 23 April 2015 Date of last revision: 1 June 2015</p>	<p>Download description (PDF - 236 KB)</p> <p>Download data package (ZIP - 1.6 MB)</p> <p>Download checksum (ZIP - 1 KB)</p>	<p>This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.</p>  

Source: <http://www.syngenta.com>

Tokyo Metro is a rapid transit system in Tokyo, Japan has released information such as train location and delay times for all lines as open data. The company held an Open Data Utilization Competition from 12 September to 17 November, 2014 to promote development of an app using this data and continues to provide the data even after the competition ended. However, many restrictions such as non-commercial use, or app can only be used for Tokyo Metro lines has weakened the efficiency of open data, it is still valued as an initial step of open private data.

Figure 3 DM of Tokyo Metro Open data Contest



Source: <https://developer.tokyometroapp.jp/>

IV. How to enhance Open Private Data

Open Private Data is totally different from Open Government Data since “motivation” is vital for private institutions to release their own data. Unlike the government data can be disclosed and free to use via administrative order or legislation, all of the data controlled by private institutions can only be opened under their own will. The initiative for open data therefore shall focus on how to motivate private sectors releasing their own data-by ensuring profit and minimizing risks.

Originally, open data shall be available freely for everyone to use without any restrictions, and data owners may profit indirectly as users utilizing their data creating apps, etc. but not profit from open data itself. The income is unsteady and data owners therefore lose their interest to open data. As a countermeasure, it is suggested to make data chargeable though this may contradict to the definition of open data. When data owners can charge by usage or by time, the motivation of open data would arise when open data is directly profitable.

Data owners may also worry about many legal issues when releasing their own data. They may not care about whether profitable or not but afraid of being involved into litigation disputes such as intellectual property infringement, unfair competition, etc. It is very important for data owners to have a well protected authorization agreement when releasing data, but not all of them is able to afford the cost of making agreement for each data sharing. Therefore, a standard sample of contract that can be widely adopted plays a very important role for open private data.

A data sharing platform would be a solution to help data owners sharing their own data. It can not only provide a convenient way to collect profit from data sharing but help data owners avoiding legal risks with the platform’s standard agreement. All the data owners have to do is just to transfer their own data to the platform without concern since the platform would handle other affairs.

V. Conclusion

Actively engaging the private sector in the open data value-chain is considered an innovation imperative as it is highly related to the development of information economy. Although many works still need to be done such as identifying mechanisms for catalyzing private sector engagement, these works can be done by organizations such as the World Bank and the Centre for Open Data Enterprise. Private-public collaboration is also important when it comes to strengthening the global data infrastructure, and the benefits of open data are diverse and range from improved efficiency of public administrations to economic growth in the private sector. However, open private data is not the goal but merely a start for open data revolution. It is to add variation for other organizations and individuals to analyze to create innovations while individuals, private sectors, or government will benefit from that innovation and being encouraged to release much more data to strengthen this data circulation.

[1] Global Open Data Index, <https://index.okfn.org/place/> (Last visited: May 15, 2017)

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