Open Government Data in China: Lesson Learnt and New Approaches

Feng Gao
Open Data China
fenggao@opendatachina.com

ABSTRACT

With the recently released mandate listing open data as one of ten key national projects for big data development, open data is rapidly growing in China. More than 15 open data portals have been launched in the past few years and couple of major cities including Beijing and Shanghai have run open data competitions to form local open data ecosystem. While there were successful stories, local governments in China face many challenges such as lack of clear guidance on what data could be open, how to secure departments' buy-in, and how to track the usage of open data. This panel thus aims to bring in front-line open data practitioners to share experience and exchange knowledge in tackling those challenges and explore possible new interventions.

CCS Concepts

• Social and professional topics~Governmental regulations

Keywords

Open Data

1. INTRODUCTION

The McKinsey Global Institute have estimated that Open Data can unlock 3-5 trillion dollars a year of benefits globally [1]. Open Data from the Global Positioning System already contributes $96 billion a year to the US economy alone. This underlines the importance of open data for stimulating economic growth, supporting good governance, and enabling social innovation has been widely recognized.

Many governments and local authorities have started to release their data in order to gain these advantages, to add to their global competitiveness and to incubate national data-services companies with the potential and experience to go on to become global players. There are already at least six companies powered by Open Data each worth more than $1 billion and which did not exist 10 years ago [2]. New applications and start-ups powered by open data are now emerging every day - there are 500 transport applications in London alone - and many local authorities and central government departments are actively promoting innovation and new ideas from businesses and communities on how their open data can be used.

China, as the largest developing country, has recently followed up this open data movement quite closely. Shanghai and Beijing launched open data portals back to 2012 and until the end of 2015,

there are already more than 15 local portals launched in China.

Moreover, the State Council released a new mandate [3] in the autumn of 2015 on pushing the development of big data and this mandate lists the open data as one of ten key national projects expecting that a national portal will be launched by the end of 2018.

While there were successful stories, governments in China face many challenges such as what data could be open, how to secure departments' buy-in, and how to track the usage of open data. This panel thus aims to bring in independent observer, high-level policy maker, and front-line open data practitioners to share experience and exchange knowledge in tackling those challenges and explore possible new interventions.

2. PANEL STRUCTURE AND QUESTIONS

The panel will have one moderator and five panelists:

- One researcher, as independent observer to governments' efforts

- One central government officer, as high-level policy maker

- Three local government officers, as front-line practitioner

The panel will begin with a brief overview of open data in China by the researcher to set the context for further discussion. The overview will address:

1. What kind of legal framework and policy is available to support the development of open data?

2. What is the current status of supply of open data?

3. What initial impact has been made by open data initiatives?

Then the central government officer will be invited to share the high-level view of central government on the development of open data, with a focus on:

1. How does open data fit in the government's big data plan?

2. What role does the central government play in open data development?

3. What is the current status of open data development at national level?

Three local government officers then will share their stories at local level, addressing following questions:

1. What's the main motivation to open government data?

2. What's the management structure of your local initiative? Is there a dedicated agency/team/person responsible for directing the open data initiative?

3. Does the local initiative receive senior leadership support?

4. Do your fellow department/agency buy in the idea of open data and proactively support it? What kind of mechanism you have to make department/agency work with you?

The panel will conclude with questions from audience and discussion among panelists. It is expected that the discussion will lead to the reflection on current intervention and help practitioners to come up with new ideas.

3. PANEL PARTICIPANTS

3.1 Moderators

Dr. Feng Gao

Founder, Open Data China, AND

Research Fellow, Lab for Digital and Mobile Governance, Fudan University

3.2 Panelists

- **Central Government:**

Mrs Xiao Zhang

Director, Big Data Division, Cyberspace Administration of China

- **Local Government:**

Mr Yong Mu

Chief Engineer, Beijing Information Center

Mrs Wei Qiu

Deputy Director, Big Data Division, Shanghai Commission of Economy and Informatization

Mrs Li Lin

Deputy Director, Nanhai Data Coordination Bureau

- **Academe:**

Dr Lei Zheng

Director, Digital and Mobile Governance Lab, Fudan University

4. REFERENCES

[1] McKinsey Global Institute. Open Data: Unlocking Innovation and Performance with Liquid Information.

[2] The World Bank. Open Data For Economic Growth

[3] China State Council, Action plan for promoting the development of Big Data