

Open Data Alliance: Interviews

Introduction

Our team was given introductions to most interviewees by way of our project mentors: Will Saunders (WA State), David Christensen (Seattle Public Library), David Doyle, and Jim Loter (City of Seattle). The interviewees show a varied level of interest in using Public Records as Open Data as well as advocating for proactive disclosure. Some of these interviewees attended previous meetings of the Open Data Alliance or have shown interest in joining.

With these interviews, we plan to generate a thematic analysis of the various experiences with Public Records and Open Data from the perspective of small to large municipalities and state departments. The review will illuminate commonalities and differences that will help focus our set of recommendations in our final document for the Open Data Alliance.

Participants

Brandy Rinearson – City Clerk/Assistant to the Mayor – City of Port Orchard

Rinearson was contacted because of her position as a Public Disclosure Officer and as City Clerk. She has experience with public records requests in Port Orchard and knowledge of the in-office protocols used for fulfilling these requests. Rinearson provided an extract of public records request logs for the team to analyze. As confirmed by Rinearson, their office does not receive a high volume of requests compared to their population. We hope to use her information to gain an understanding of the PRR process as well as insights into the positives and negatives about the process.

David Christensen – Data Analysis Lead – Seattle Public Library

Christensen was contacted because of his work with publishing several datasets on Seattle's open data website. He also used the City of Seattle's Public Records Request logs to generate a word cloud using Tableau. This word cloud and the code behind it is a helpful first step to our projects overall trend analysis. Christensen also provided significant insights into what steps are necessary for a successful coalition or alliance.

Cindy Evans – Former Manager of Legal Affairs – Washington State Auditor's Office

As a lawyer and consulting expert in public records, Evans was contacted because of her wealth of knowledge about our research subject. With her previous work in the State Auditor's Office, Evans saw the financial impact of public records request fulfillment. Evans was adamant that open data is about transparency, but that public records requests have a more significant problem with records management than with frequent requests. With her experience researching on a current legislative study, we felt that she provided a uniquely high-level perspective.

Evan Ward – Strategic Advisor & Public Disclosure Officer – Seattle Fire Department

Ward was contacted to interview because of his position as a Public Disclosure Officer and his relationship with David Doyle when focusing on open data. As being a part of Seattle's Fire Department, he receives a significant amount of Public Record Requests per year and has advocated for making some dataset open. We felt that Ward is in a position where he deals with requests enough to recognize possible patterns but also understands the benefits and barriers to publishing specific datasets openly.

Terence Artz – Records and Disclosure Officer – Washington State Department of Licensing & Robin Griggs – Enterprise Data Architect – Washington State Department of Licensing

Initially, Artz was chosen because of his work as a Records and Disclosure Officer at the Department of Licensing. We felt that he would provide useful information about public records requests at the state level and for his department. Artz suggested speaking with Griggs, who is familiar with Open Data and the possibilities of an Open Data Alliance. Artz and Griggs built upon several burgeoning themes for public records requests as well as their use as open data.

Harold Goldes – Information Governance & Public Disclosure Officer – Washington State Department of Enterprise Services

Goldes was selected because of his experience as a Public Disclosure Officer at the state level and as a previous attendee of the Open Data Alliance. We felt that Goldes provided an interesting perspective coming from the Department of Enterprise Services and in combination with his law degree. Goldes also proactively publishes specific datasets, and we felt his insights into that process would be useful for our project.

Ryan Leisinger – Solutions Architect – Washington Technology Solutions

Leisinger was chosen because of his relationship with open data and his technical perspective concerning the logistics of proactively publishing data. Leisinger is familiar with the Open Data Alliance and provided insights into the progress of such an alliance for the future. With his work advocating for accessibility in technology, Leisinger gives us a look at open data with vulnerable populations in mind.

Steve Kollmansberger – Information Resources Manager – Washington State Department of Transportation

We chose to interview Kollmansberger because of his previous participation in the Open Data Alliance as well as his position as Information Resources Manager at WSDOT. Kollmansberger spoke about his open data experience within WSDOT and with other informal organizations such as Data Geeks. He offered insight into the risks associated with the automatic publication of data on an open portal, such as "staleness" as well as the issues with clarifying data stewardship.

Andy Everett – Metadata and Taxonomy Analyst – Washington State Department of Transportation

The interview of Everett was suggested by our previous interviewee, Steve Kollmansberger. Everett's work with the WSDOT data catalog and experience with open access items published on

the WSDOT website. Everett provided insights on the difficulties with making specific data sets available online and emphasized the need for data sets to be machine readable to fulfill the open data definition. Everett also expanded on his participation in the Data Geeks meetings with Kollmansberger.

Leni Oman – Knowledge Strategist – Washington State Department of Transportation

Kollmansberger introduced us to Oman because of her involvement with knowledge management in WSDOT and to speak with her about departmental data sharing relationships. Oman provided information about the need for an enterprise architecture strategy towards organizing WSDOT information and allowing for data sets to be freed up for publication.

Michael Mann – Managing Consultant – Legislative Evaluation & Accountability Program Committee

Mann was contacted because of his previous participation and interest in the Open Data Alliance. Working at LEAP, Mann interacts with data from other agencies and institutions and works to consolidate those for their reports. As a hub of multi-departmental information, we felt his insights into this process would be useful to our project concerning the professional relationships of members in the Open Data Alliance.

Sean Krier – Enterprise Information Manager – City of Olympia

Krier and the City of Olympia are an integral partner to the Open Data Alliance. As someone who works directly with Public Records and Open Data, Krier's knowledge of both realms is useful to our project. Krier's spoke about the uniqueness of Olympia's requests and the difficult translation into identifying datasets to publish on an open data portal. Krier also explored open data relationships between previous Open Data Alliance members and the establishment of public records data as one commonality between departments and municipalities.

Paul Alley – Open Data Architect – King County Information Technology Data Services & Shelby Miklethun – Program Manager – King County Department of Executive Services

– July 17th Interview