CIVIC TECHNOLOGY: INTRODUCTIONS

@abhinemani | CAPP 30130 | University of Chicago

WHAT IS CIVIC TECH?

(And who are you?)

BLIGHT IN NEW ORLEANS

A Case Study

BLIGHT IN NOLA

CITIZEN: WHERE IS BLIGHT?

Residents were taking it upon themselves to map vacant housing.

MAYOR: WHERE IS BLIGHT?

The mayor and other officials struggled to track blight themselves.
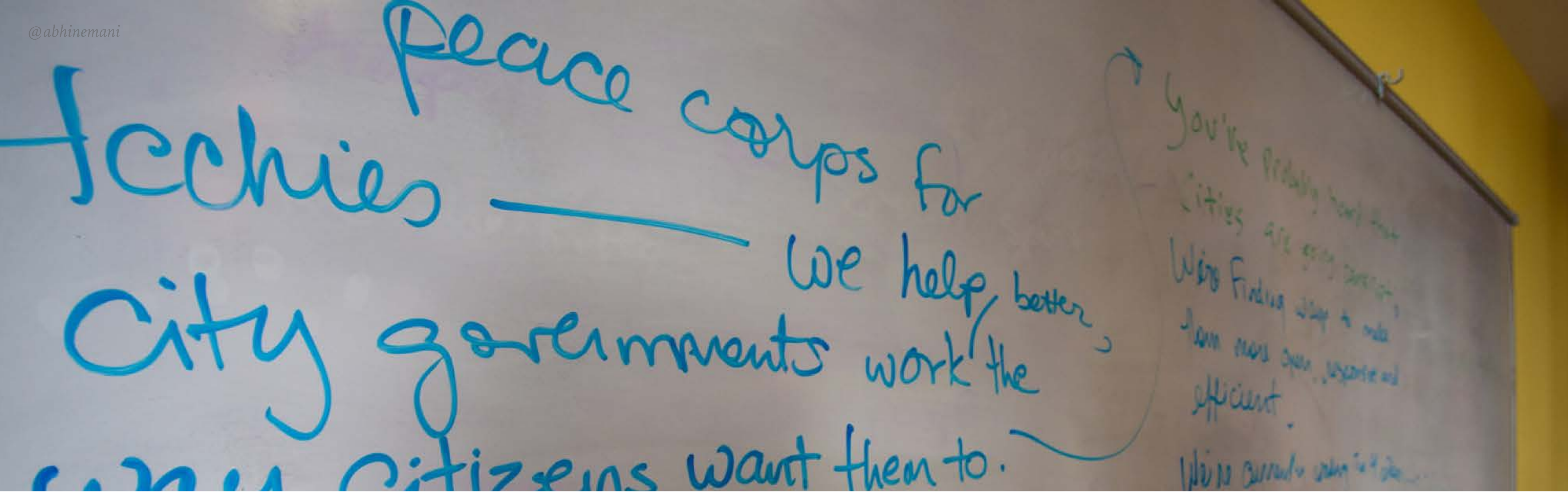
"

A better, digital way to track blighted properties?

3 years. $3,000,000.

-New Orleans CIO

CODE FOR AMERICA

NGO designed as a "peace corps for geeks" for cities

A team of three CfA fellows were sent to New Orleans to work with the Mayor and the community to find creative ways to use technology to reduce blight in the city.

🔍 blight

Categories

31 Results

Sort by Most Relevant ∨

Arts, Culture, History

City Administration

City Finance and Budget

Customer Service

Benchmarks for Blight   Housing, Land Use, and Blight   ➜ External Link

In 2006, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) began acquiring quarterly extracts of U.S. Postal Service (USPS) data and publishing this data as a possible indicator of blight and vacancy for cities...
More

Updated
March 9, 2016

Views
798

Tags   blight

External Datasets

public meeting that tracks the City's progress in meeting Mayor Landrieu's stated goal of eliminating 10,000...
More

Views
5,100

t, demolition

https://data.nola.gov

AN OPEN, LEAN APPROACH

The fellows published all the data they could find as open data, making it possible to more quickly build an application — and enable others to as well.

CITIZENS & GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS COULD TRACK STATUS AND BE NOTIFIED OF CHANGES

PAPER MAPS (LIKE WE SAW BEFORE) WERE REPLACED WITH INTERACTIVE, SEARCHABLE VISUALIZATIONS
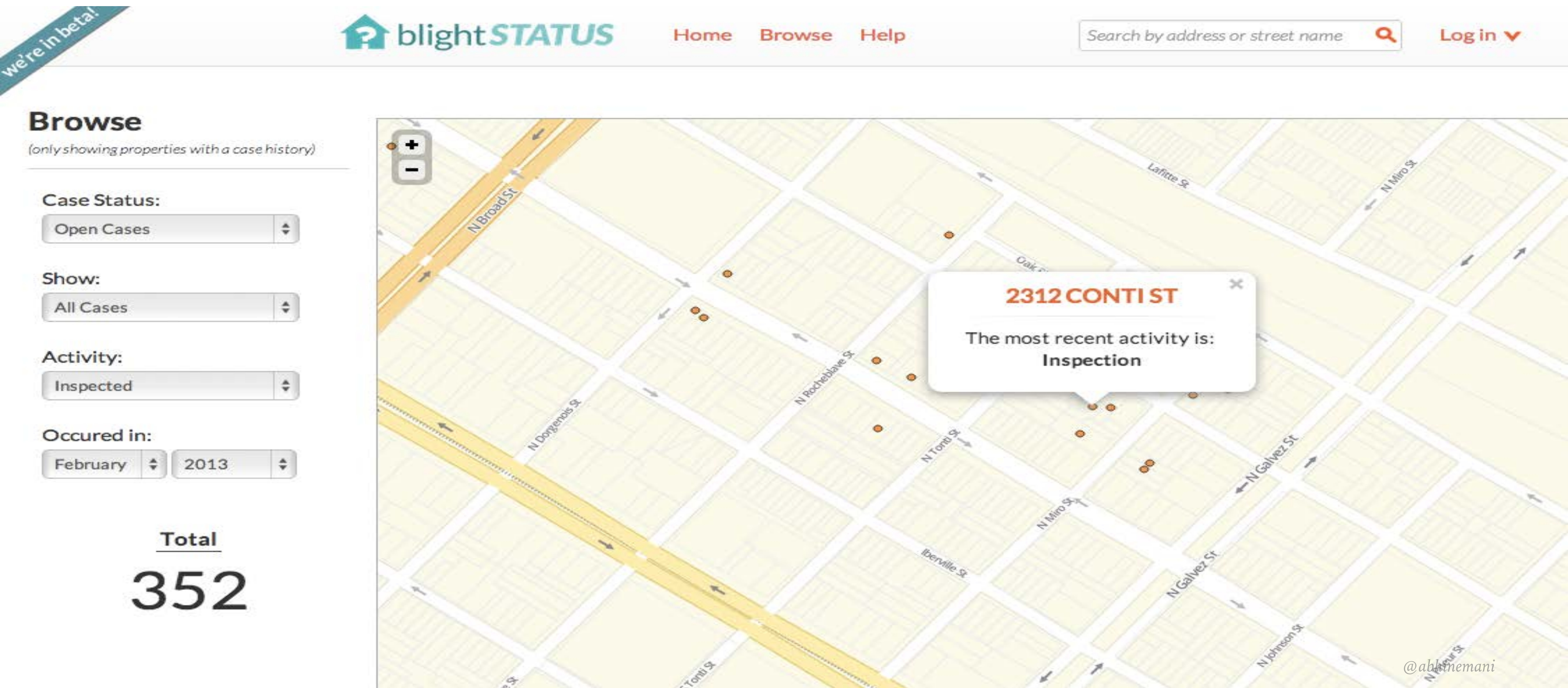
@abhinemani

"POWER USERS"

Habitat for Humanity became regular users of BlightStatus

"The app proposes a new kind of more productive communication between the two groups that moves past angry and frustrated citizens on one end, and a paralyzed city on the other."

-Fast Company

"

The Landrieu administration created BlightSTAT, a process in which representatives from [various agencies] meet to set goals and report on progress… Mayor Landrieu had [in ~1 year] more than made good on his promise, reducing the number of blighted residential properties by about 13,000.

-GovTech Magazine

"

...in the 21st Century, **good governance** & **good policy** are inextricably linked to the **digital.**"

- *Tom Steinberg*

CIVIC TECH: KEYS TO SUCCESS

Empathy	*Lean*	*Data*	*Users*	*Sustainability*
➤ Build with, not for	➤ It's more than just a technical process	➤ Data "lives" everywhere	➤ ~~If you build it they will come~~	➤ Consider your options: startup, open source, non-profit, academic, etc
➤ Talk to users	➤ Expect failure	➤ Be ready to scrape	➤ Listen and learn	➤ Tech -> Policy
➤ Understand behavior	➤ Only build what's necessary	➤ Open data is your friend	➤ Define metrics	➤ Expect to train everyone
➤ Learn what's out there	➤ Test, test, test	➤ ETLs are your best friend	➤ Find partners	➤ Document everything

@abhinemani

CIVIC TECH: KEYS TO SUCCESS

Empathy	*Lean*	*Data*	*Users*	*Sustainability*
➤ Build with, not for	➤ It's more than just a technical process	➤ Data "lives" everywhere	➤ ~~If you build it they will come~~	➤ Consider your options: startup, open source, non-profit, academic, etc
➤ Talk to users	➤ Expect failure	➤ Be ready to scrape	➤ Listen and learn	
➤ Understand behavior	➤ Only build what's necessary	➤ Open data is your friend	➤ Define metrics	➤ Tech -> Policy
➤ Learn what's out there	➤ Test, test, test	➤ ETLs are your best friend	➤ Find partners	➤ Expect to train everyone
				➤ Document everything

CIVIC TECH: KEYS TO SUCCESS

Empathy

➤ Build with, not for

➤ Talk to users

➤ Understand behavior

➤ Learn what's out there

Lean

➤ It's more than just a technical process

➤ Expect failure

➤ Only build what's necessary

➤ Test, test, test

Data

➤ Data "lives" everywhere

➤ Be ready to scrape

➤ Open data is your friend

➤ ETLs are your best friend

Users

➤ ~~If you build it they will come~~

➤ Listen and learn

➤ Define metrics

➤ Find partners

Sustainability

➤ Consider your options: startup, open source, non-profit, academic, etc

➤ Tech -> Policy

➤ Expect to train everyone

➤ Document everything

CIVIC TECH: KEYS TO SUCCESS

Empathy

- Build with, not for
- Talk to users
- Understand behavior
- Learn what's out there

Lean

- It's more than just a technical process
- Expect failure
- Only build what's necessary
- Test, test, test

Data

- Data "lives" everywhere
- Be ready to scrape
- Open data is your friend
- ETLs are your best friend

Users

- ~~If you build it they will come~~
- Listen and learn
- Define metrics
- Find partners

Sustainability

- Consider your options: startup, open source, non-profit, academic, etc
- Tech -> Policy
- Expect to train everyone
- Document everything

@abhinemani

CIVIC TECH: KEYS TO SUCCESS

Empathy

- Build with, not for
- Talk to users
- Understand behavior
- Learn what's out there

Lean

- It's more than just a technical process
- Expect failure
- Only build what's necessary
- Test, test, test

Data

- Data "lives" everywhere
- Be ready to scrape
- Open data is your friend
- ETLs are your best friend

Users

- ~~If you build it they will come~~
- Listen and learn
- Define metrics
- Find partners

Sustainability

- Consider your options: startup, open source, non-profit, academic, etc
- Tech -> Policy
- Expect to train everyone
- Document everything

@abhinemani

CIVIC TECH: KEYS TO SUCCESS

Empathy	*Lean*	*Data*	*Users*	*Sustainability*
➤ Build with, not for	➤ It's more than just a technical process	➤ Data "lives" everywhere	➤ ~~If you build it they will come~~	➤ Consider your options: startup, open source, non-profit, academic, etc
➤ Talk to users	➤ Expect failure	➤ Be ready to scrape	➤ Listen and learn	➤ Tech -> Policy
➤ Understand behavior	➤ Only build what's necessary	➤ Open data is your friend	➤ Define metrics	➤ Expect to train everyone
➤ Learn what's out there	➤ Test, test, test	➤ ETLs are your best friend	➤ Find partners	➤ Document everything

COURSE DETAILS

How we'll work together

CIVIC TECH MEANS POLICY AND TECHNOLOGY

This isn't going to be your typical CS course…

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

- ➤ A different "socratic method"
    - ➤ Ask questions
    - ➤ Be ready to (try to) answer them
        - ➤ Pro-tip: do the readings
- ➤ "Constructive selfishness"
    - ➤ Give feedback
    - ➤ Ask for what you want
    - ➤ Fill out the survey
- ➤ The city is your classroom
    - ➤ Engage in civic tech events
    - ➤ Want to talk to someone? Just ask.
- ➤ Policy, not Politics

@abhinemani

"CIVIC" TECH SPECTRUM

*Political Campaigns
& Advocacy*

change.org
NGP/Salsa

*Community
Engagement*

NextDoor / Neighborland
CrimeAround.us / Councilmatic

*Government
Service Delivery*

SeeClickFix / LargeLots
SeamlessDocs/Mark43

Consumer Tech

"CIVIC" TECH SPECTRUM

**Political Campaigns
& Advocacy**

change.org
NGP/Salsa

**Community
Engagement**

NextDoor / Neighborland
CrimeAround.us / Councilmatic

**Government
Service Delivery**

SeeClickFix / LargeLots
SeamlessDocs/Mark43

Consumer Tech

COURSE DETAILS

➤ Syllabus, Readings, Assignments

  ➤ abhinemani.com/civictechcourse

  ➤ Canvas

➤ Assignments

  ➤ Weekly assignment (prose or code)

➤ Online participation

  ➤ Canvas Discussion

  ➤ Class blog

➤ Final

  ➤ Building civic app

  ➤ Work in teams of 2-3

@abhinemani

ASSIGNMENTS

➤ Read

  ➤ *Beyond Transparency: Chapter 1* by Joel Mahoney

  ➤ *Beyond Tech: Policymaking in the Digital Age* by Jennifer Pahlka

  ➤ *Government as a Platform* by Tim O'Reilly

  ➤ *Civic Tech as a Tween* by Cyd Harrell

➤ Do

  ➤ Student Survey

    ➤ https://forms.gle/psJ1NymkqmVy4Wxu6

Civic technologies are the products, features, and tools that improve government service delivery, community relations, or resident quality of life.