

Data Commons Cooperative



Annual Report 2015

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Contents

Contents	2
1 Introduction	4
2 Name and place of business	5
3 Members of the co-op	6
3.1 Canadian Worker Co-op Federation	7
3.2 Carolina Common Enterprise	7
3.3 Collaborative Agronomic Partnerships	7
3.4 Cooperation Works!	7
3.5 Cooperative Development Institute	7
3.6 Cooperative Fund of New England	8
3.7 Cooperative Grocer Network	8
3.8 Cooperative Maine	8
3.9 Cultivate.Coop	8
3.10 Eastern Conference for Workplace Democracy	8
3.11 Food Co-op Initiative	8
3.12 Grassroots Economic Organizing	8
3.13 hOurworld	8
3.14 Julia Poznik	9
3.15 Keystone Development Center, Inc.	9
3.16 Manitoba Cooperative Association	9
3.17 New Economy Coalition	9
3.18 North American Students of Co-operation	9
3.19 Northeast Food Knowledge Ecosystem	9
3.20 Northwest Cooperative Development Center	9
3.21 Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance	9
3.22 Rocky Mountain Farmers Union Co-op Development Center	10
3.23 Sarapis Foundation	10
3.24 Shareable and the Sharing Cities Network	10
3.25 Solidarity Economy Network	10
3.26 Solidarity NYC	10
3.27 Solidarity Piedmont	10
3.28 Tiny.Coop	11
3.29 US Federation of Worker Co-ops	11
3.30 Worcester Solidarity and Green Economy (SAGE) Alliance	11
4 The board and operations	12

4.1	Jamie Campbell	12
4.2	Emily Lippold Cheney	12
4.3	Andy Danforth	12
4.4	Kathleen Fekete	13
4.5	Paul Fitzpatrick	13
4.6	Noémi Giszpenc	13
4.7	Lauren Hudson	13
4.8	Jim Johnson	13
4.9	Daphne Loring	13
4.10	David Morgan	13
4.11	Incorporators	13
4.12	Alumni	14
4.13	Financial help	14
4.14	Other help	14
5	Finances	16
5.1	Fiscal Year 2014	16
6	Projects	17
6.1	Solidarity Economy Network	17
6.2	techworker.coop	18
6.3	Investment in infrastructure	18
6.4	SolidarityNYC	19

Section 1

Introduction

June 17, 2015

In its third year of incorporation the Data Commons has focused on internal strategizing which has included revisiting the vision and mission of the cooperative as well as supporting our projects and members. Our draft vision and mission up for member ratification more accurately reflects not only the work that the DCC currently does, but the role we as a cooperative intend to play in this collaborative, generative, and distributed economy. As all of you know, it's difficult to create organizations that embody the best of our ideals, but by making explicit the link between the economy we want and the way we manage flows of information, the DCC is staking out a critical and important component of creating a better world.

Since our last AGM, we have grown our membership from 24 to 30, adding members who represent the breadth of the solidarity economy spectrum. As is true of our membership writ large, our new members' scale also ranges from the individual, to the grassroots and sectoral. We welcome them into the co-op and are excited to see what projects develop from these new partnerships.

Exciting collaborations within the co-op have continued throughout 2014. With help from the Data Commons, SolidarityNYC has completely revamped its map of the solidarity economy, increasing its functionality and reinforcing it as an integral organizing tool. We're looking forward to facilitating fruitful collaboration that cuts down on duplication of effort among our members US Solidarity Economy Network (with a core researcher based in the Philadelphia area), the Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance, and the Keystone Development Center, which has just hired Jim Johnson (a DCC founder) to conduct a region-wide survey of cooperatives. It is heartening to see (and yes, to benefit from) the collaboration within our nerdy cooperative.

It is for these reasons that the work of the Data Commons is so timely and needed, and that we've decided to launch our crowdfunding campaign this summer. Making data readily available to our members and this movement is our top priority and the funds generated from our campaign will enable us to support current and future projects within the co-op. This past year has proved to be a crucial one for sharpening our focus and building relationships between members. We're excited to see how these relationships continue to grow into the next year and what fantastic things we're able to accomplish with the resources each of us has.



*Lauren Taylor Hudson
Co-op President
SolidarityNYC Member*

in cooperation,

*Lauren Taylor Hudson
Board Chair*

Section 2

Name and place of business

The legal name of the co-op is:

THE DATA COMMONS COOPERATIVE, INC.

It is registered as a Mercantile Co-Operative with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, with ID number 001083005. Its date of incorporation in Massachusetts is July 5th, 2012. You can find our filings with the state at:

<http://corp.sec.state.ma.us/CorpWeb/CorpSearch/CorpSummary.aspx?FEIN=001083005>

There's a copy of our bylaws at <http://member.datacommons.coop/bylaws>. The location of the co-op's office is:

21 GOODNOW RD.
SHELBURNE FALLS
MA 01370, USA

Board members and the operation and tech teams are from all over, collaborating by email and teleconference. There may well be someone not too far from you who is, or has been involved in the Data Commons, so let us know if you are interested in meeting up in person.



*Bridge of Flowers
Shelburne Falls
(photo by: masstravel)*

Section 3

Members of the co-op

There are currently **30** members of the co-op. Members that joined since the last annual report are:

- ▷ Collaborative Agronomic Partnerships
- ▷ Julia Poznik
- ▷ Keystone Development Center, Inc.
- ▷ Northeast Food Knowledge Ecosystem
- ▷ Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance
- ▷ Worcester Solidarity and Green Economy (SAGE) Alliance

Here is the full membership list, in alphabetical order:

- ▷ Canadian Worker Co-op Federation
- ▷ Carolina Common Enterprise
- ▷ Collaborative Agronomic Partnerships
- ▷ Cooperation Works!
- ▷ Cooperative Development Institute
- ▷ Cooperative Fund of New England
- ▷ Cooperative Grocer Network
- ▷ Cooperative Maine
- ▷ Cultivate.Coop
- ▷ Eastern Conference for Workplace Democracy
- ▷ Food Co-op Initiative
- ▷ Grassroots Economic Organizing
- ▷ hOurworld
- ▷ Julia Poznik
- ▷ Keystone Development Center, Inc.
- ▷ Manitoba Cooperative Association
- ▷ New Economy Coalition
- ▷ North American Students of Co-operation
- ▷ Northeast Food Knowledge Ecosystem
- ▷ Northwest Cooperative Development Center
- ▷ Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance
- ▷ Rocky Mountain Farmers Union Co-op Development Center
- ▷ Sarapis Foundation
- ▷ Shareable and the Sharing Cities Network
- ▷ Solidarity Economy Network

- ▷ [Solidarity NYC](#)
- ▷ [Solidarity Piedmont](#)
- ▷ [Tiny.Coop](#)
- ▷ [US Federation of Worker Co-ops](#)
- ▷ [Worcester Solidarity and Green Economy \(SAGE\) Alliance](#)

We give brief descriptions of all members here.

3.1 Canadian Worker Co-op Federation

CWCF has been committed to helping to build a (worker) co-operative economy since its founding in 1991. We drafted & signed the “[Quebec Declaration](#)” in 2011. Below is an excerpt:

“We have the mission to help worker co-operatives build a new world with a just and caring human face. In signing this Declaration, we pledge to do everything possible, in accordance with our values, to accomplish this mission:

- ▷ by facilitating the creation of new worker co-operatives,
- ▷ by facilitating the harmonious development of our co-operative members, and
- ▷ by partnering with all organizations sharing both this vision and the will to act for the emergence of this new mode of equitable, sustainable socio-economic development
- ...”

3.2 Carolina Common Enterprise

Organized as a new cooperative development center for North Carolina.

3.3 Collaborative Agronomic Partnerships

We attempt to identify cooperating individuals or groups who are involved in social enterprises designing, producing, marketing, and distributing resources and products within a collaborative economy. The goal is to organize ourselves in a value-chain framework, redefined so as to further the formation of resilient, sustainable partnerships by strengthening management teams and creating a source of revenue.

3.4 Cooperation Works!

CooperationWorks! is a national organization of cooperative development centers and practitioners that span the breadth of the United States. Using innovative strategies and proven business practices, CW Centers provide expertise across all aspects of co-op enterprise development, including feasibility analysis, business plan development, business launch and on-going training for operational success.

3.5 Cooperative Development Institute

Our mission is to develop the cooperative economy in the Northeast through supporting co-ops and networks. We provide direct business assistance, training, and networking. We have been supporting the Data Commons project since its inception in 2005, and helped it incorporate into a co-op last year.

3.6 Cooperative Fund of New England

For 38 years, CFNE has raised social investment from individuals and institutions and has made over 630 loans with these funds totaling over \$29 million. Most of these funds have been made to co-ops, including in the grocery, housing, worker, and agricultural sectors.

3.7 Cooperative Grocer Network

We provide a LinkedIn-like platform for more than 2,000 food co-op board and staff, publish 116,000 nodes of cooperative content on our website, and publish 28 year-old magazine, Cooperative Grocer. Mission: To strengthen all food co-ops by building community and facilitating the sharing and development of resources.

3.8 Cooperative Maine

Our mission is to promote increased development of cooperatives in Maine through supporting existing cooperatives and helping new ones form. Cooperative Maine was formed in the spring of 2007 by members of co-ops and others interested in promoting a more humane, egalitarian, and democratic economy and society.

3.9 Cultivate.Coop

[Cultivate.Coop](#) democratizes knowledge and information about co-ops and cooperatives. We have thousands of visitors a month.

3.10 Eastern Conference for Workplace Democracy

The Eastern Conference for Workplace Democracy (ECWD) is a non-profit cooperative organization established to aid in the continued growth of the workplace democracy movement. The ECWD is managed by the Coordinating Council. The ECWD works in cooperation with the U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives to promote and develop worker-owned enterprises regionally and nationally.

3.11 Food Co-op Initiative

The Food Co-op Initiative Program is a 501(c)3 non-profit, dedicated to enabling a faster and more efficient start-up process to develop new retail grocery co-ops.

3.12 Grassroots Economic Organizing

We create and share stories, news and analysis about cooperative and solidarity economy organizing efforts, and we also facilitate conversations among movement practitioners to strengthen and deepen the work of inter-cooperation.

3.13 hOurworld

We are a worker owned co-op. We offer free access to software for timebanks across the country. We partner with local community timebanks and co-train with them. We hope to thread the time economy into the co-op economy!

3.14 Julia Poznik

I am a graduate student (Econ PhD) and a researcher interested in alternative/sustainable business models. I am working on developing a dissertation topic, and a smaller course-related research topic, that would generate useful research and analysis for promoting the cooperative economy. Hopefully I can do research that will be read by someone other than academics! :)

3.15 Keystone Development Center, Inc.

The Keystone Development Center (KDC) has been providing technical assistance to emerging, start-up and established cooperatives along with other group-based businesses throughout the Mid-Atlantic Region for over thirteen years. Our consultants provide quality research and business development support to a variety of clients. We serve businesses and individuals across varied industry sectors in four states: Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, and Delaware.

3.16 Manitoba Cooperative Association

MCA is a provincial association of cooperative organizations, created by its members to enhance and support the development of a united, growing and influential cooperative movement in Manitoba.

3.17 New Economy Coalition

We are building a coalition of organizations and individuals committed to the values of a cooperative economy, so that we can more effectively coordinate, collaborate, and grow this movement together. We are also actively organizing students and young people on University campuses across North America. Many of these young people are passionate about coops, and we work hard to connect them with the resources they need to get involved with cooperatives.

3.18 North American Students of Co-operation

The NASCO family exists to organize and educate cooperatives — particularly common equity coops — and their members for the stated purpose of promoting a community-oriented cooperative movement.

3.19 Northeast Food Knowledge Ecosystem

Creating data and information sharing standards and infrastructure, connecting people, technology and information in support of healthy, just, equitable and resilient food systems across the Northeast US.

3.20 Northwest Cooperative Development Center

We foster community economic development through the cooperative business model.

3.21 Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance

The Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance (PACA) is a cooperative whose members are co-ops in the Philadelphia region. PACA is also a 501(c)3 nonprofit dedicated to growing the cooperative economy. Our mission is to improve the lives of people in the Philadelphia region by supporting democratically

organized businesses, promoting the principles of the international cooperative movement, and growing the cooperative economy. We envision a vibrant and growing network of cooperative enterprises that operate in all sectors of the economy to build a better world—providing essential services, strengthening democratic organizations, creating quality jobs, building community wealth, reducing poverty, strengthening our local economy, protecting the environment and increasing community engagement.

3.22 Rocky Mountain Farmers Union Co-op Development Center

We support numerous cooperative and related projects especially in rural areas of the Rocky Mountain West.

3.23 Sarapis Foundation

Sarapis helps nonprofit, community and cooperative organizations use free, libre and open source tools and techniques to more effectively collaborate on open solutions to local challenges.

3.24 Shareable and the Sharing Cities Network

The Sharing Cities Network will be a grassroots network for sharing innovators to discover together how to create as many sharing cities around the world as fast as possible. The network will knit together a community of local sharing movements. The Sharing Cities Network will scale up and replicate successful sharing models by: - increasing collaboration between sharing projects - spreading best practices among members - catalyzing new sharing projects (including many forms of cooperatives) - ultimately, creating complete sharing cities To accomplish this our initial plans are to: - host peer learning through online classes and forums - help you create local sharing actions, such as sharing city map jams, share fests, gift circles, and skillshares - facilitate network-wide projects and campaigns - assist you with getting sharing-friendly policies in your city.

3.25 Solidarity Economy Network

The US Solidarity Economy Network works to build and strengthen the solidarity economy in the U.S., and to connect it to the global solidarity economy movement.

3.26 Solidarity NYC

SolidarityNYC connects, supports, and promotes New York City's solidarity economy by making pre-existing solidarity economics practices more visible. We achieve this through our various projects including our short films, interactive map, and research, all of which provide tangible examples of members/organizations that fall under the banner of the solidarity economy.

3.27 Solidarity Piedmont

We map the places in our area that participate in more humane, environmentally-sustainable, democratic, and fair economic practices. We try to give visibility to what could be called our local solidarity economy and research and celebrate the existing successes in our region while helping to grow possible new pieces of the network.

3.28 Tiny.Coop

We are setting up an open source, co-operatively run infrastructure for the web.

3.29 US Federation of Worker Co-ops

Founded in 2004, we provide member services, consulting services, and public education to support worker cooperatives. See our website at www.usworker.coop and our DAWN project at www.dawn.coop.

3.30 Worcester Solidarity and Green Economy (SAGE) Alliance

We actively organize, educate about and make connections amongst new economy and co-op initiatives in Worcester and our bioregion.

Section 4

The board and operations

The operations of the co-op are in transition. A Steering Committee worked over many years to bring the co-op into existence, and some members of that committee agreed to serve as the co-op's initial Board of Directors in the period between incorporation (July, 2012) and the first annual meeting (June, 2013). We are grateful to all members of the Steering Committee for their work in fostering the co-op. At the time of writing, the co-op's decision-making body is the following Board of Directors:

- ▷ Jamie Campbell (former President, former Treasurer)
- ▷ Emily Lippold Cheney
- ▷ Noémi Giszpenc (Secretary)
- ▷ Lauren Hudson (President)
- ▷ Mira Luna
- ▷ David Morgan (Treasurer, former Secretary)

The board has chosen to delegate certain responsibilities for the day-to-day activity of the co-op to an "Operations Team":

- ▷ Kathleen Fekete
- ▷ Paul Fitzpatrick
- ▷ Noémi Giszpenc
- ▷ Daphne Loring

Here is a more complete list of people involved in the running of the co-op and roles they play (or played):

4.1 Jamie Campbell

Director; former President; former Treasurer; former Steering Committee member.

4.2 Emily Lippold Cheney

Director.

4.3 Andy Danforth

Assistant Treasurer; Incorporator.

4.4 Kathleen Fekete

Operations Team member; Incorporator.

4.5 Paul Fitzpatrick

Former Director; Treasurer; former Secretary; Operations Team member; former Steering Committee member; Tech Team member.

4.6 Noémi Giszpenc

Director; Secretary; Operations Team member.

4.7 Lauren Hudson

Director; President.

4.8 Jim Johnson

Former Director; former Treasurer; former Steering Committee member; Tech Team member.

4.9 Daphne Loring

Operations Team member.

4.10 David Morgan

Director; Treasurer; former Secretary.

4.11 Incorporators

The following people helped get the co-op incorporated in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts:

- ▷ **Steve Backman.**
- ▷ **Andy Danforth.**
- ▷ **Kathleen Fekete.**
- ▷ **Micha Josephy.**
- ▷ **Ben Mauer.**
- ▷ **Brian van Slyke.**
- ▷ **Jeremiah Ward.**

Thank you all!

4.12 Alumni

The Data Commons has been shaped by the following people:

- ▷ **Jennifer Caruso:** Former Operations Team member.
- ▷ **Melissa Hoover:** Former Director; former Membership Committee member; former Steering Committee member.
- ▷ **Neily Jennings:** Former Operations Team member; former Steering Committee member.
- ▷ **Joe Marraffino:** Former Director; former President; former Operations Team member.
- ▷ **Ethan Miller:** Former Director; former President; former Membership Committee member; former Steering Committee member; former Tech Team member.
- ▷ **Adam Schwartz:** Former Steering Committee member.

4.13 Financial help

- ▷ **Margaret Bau**
- ▷ **David Brinovec:** Supported rescue of techworker.coop domain.
- ▷ **Jennifer Caruso**
- ▷ **South Mountain Company**
- ▷ **Rainbow Grocery Cooperative**
- ▷ **USDA Rural Development:** A USDA RBEG grant was instrumental to the development of the Data Commons as a (with luck) viable business.
- ▷ **Rebecca Dunn**
- ▷ **Cooperative Fund of New England**
- ▷ **Equal Exchange**
- ▷ **Pedal Express**
- ▷ **Frank Lindenfeld**
- ▷ **Community Pharmacy**
- ▷ **Cooperative Charitable Trust:** We are very grateful to the CCT for its low-bureaucracy giving. Its grants were very helpful for sustaining momentum at key moments in the project's evolution.

4.14 Other help

Far too many people have helped out in making the co-op a reality than we can reasonably name here, or in ways that do not fit the categories above. Here are some highlights:

- ▷ **Benjamin Bradley:** Benjamin contributed to the development of find.coop, while at Ronin Tech Collective and then GaiaHost Collective.
- ▷ **Jennifer Caruso:** Jennifer was instrumental in finding funding for the co-op's business development, while at the Cooperative Development Institute.
- ▷ **Josh Crawford:** Josh helped create an early prototype of find.coop, while at Brattleboro Tech Collective.
- ▷ **Patrick J. Deluhery:** Patrick took care of the legal aspects of the co-op's incorporation, and fine-tuning its bylaws.
- ▷ **Dave Evans:** Dave helped create an early prototype of find.coop, while at Brattleboro Tech Collective.
- ▷ **Jason Lemieux:** Jason contributed to the development of find.coop, while at Eggplant Active Media Workers Collective.
- ▷ **Ben Mauer:** Ben chipped in some much needed graphic design for find.coop, thanks Quilted!

- ▷ **Jason Mott:** Jason contributed to the development of find.coop, while at Brattleboro Tech Collective and then Ronin Tech Collective.
- ▷ **Charles Uchu Strader:** Charles provided hosting support for find.coop with GaiaHost Collective, long before the Data Commons could pay its way.

Section 5

Finances

5.1 Fiscal Year 2014

The Co-op maintains a detailed ledger, available to any member upon request. Our bookkeeping is quite simple, our operations are conservative and transactions are few. However, 2014 was the busiest year on record, with twice the activity and double the bottom line of the prior year.

Data Commons Cooperative still enjoys the benefits of being debt-free. As of the close of the fiscal year 2014, the balance in our accounts was:

Account Type	Balance (US\$)
Current account	\$1,901.65
Money market account	\$10.00

Income in FY2014 totalled \$5,660.37 and outlays came to \$5,858.50. Officially, DCC posted a loss of \$198.13.

Dues were DCC's sole source of revenue. Sixteen members contributed \$4,519.13 to the organization. The difference between this figure and income is due to a legacy funds transfer of \$1,971.70, a sum of past donations to DCC that Cooperative Development Institute held in reserve.

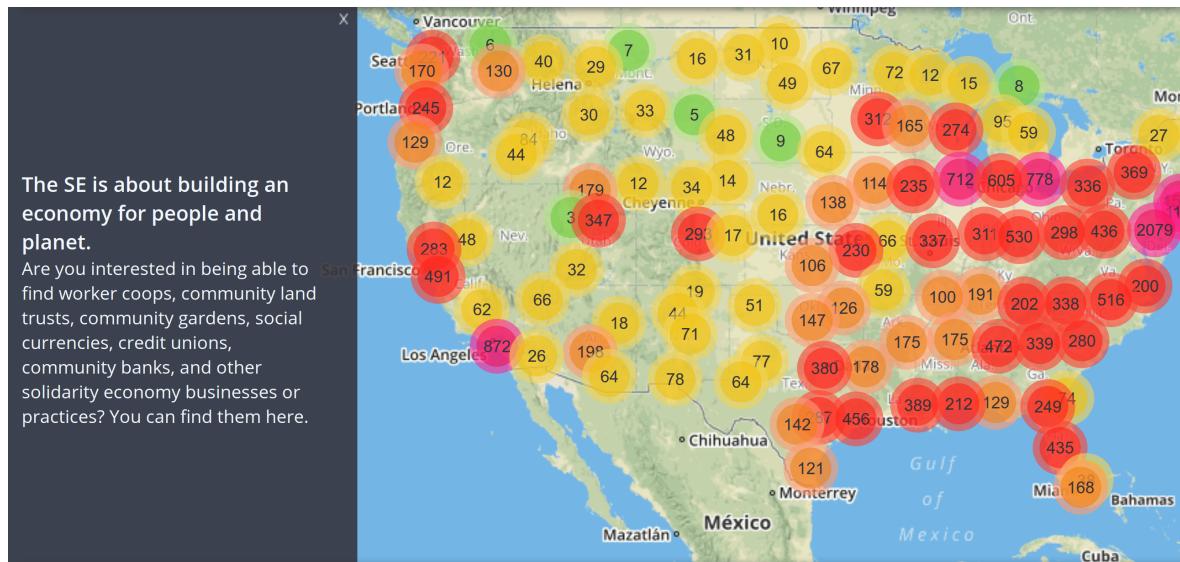
Expenses were owed to the state for filing fees and taxes, to service providers for web and communications systems, and to board and staff for travel reimbursements and salaries, respectively. Our largest expense was staffing, at \$3,840.

Section 6

Projects

6.1 Solidarity Economy Network

In September 2013, the U.S. governments National Science Foundation (NSF) funded five researchers (two economists, two geographers, and one political scientist) to study the solidarity economy in the eastern United States. The grant covers two years of research at four research sites representing different population scales: New York City (pop. 8.2 million); Philadelphia (pop. 1.5 million); Worcester, MA (pop. 180,000), and Western Mass., which is home to large number of rural communities. One portion of the grant covers creation of an interactive website that will display the data collected about the solidarity economy. In 2014, the Data Commons connected the SEN researchers to [ParIT](#), a web developer worker co-op member of the [Canadian Worker Co-op Federation](#). ParIT has been extending the Stone Soup directory software originally developed by the Data Commons Co-op to meet the needs of SEN. The Data Commons will host the directory beyond the period funded by NSF.



The Solidarity Economy map and directory developed by ParIT and SEN is close to release. It is based on Data Commons software, and will be hosted by the Data Commons beyond the NSF-funded period.

6.2 techworker.coop

In May, the <http://techworker.coop> directory almost lapsed. The Data Commons stepped in to keep the site alive, and stands ready to execute the will of the nascent tech co-op network. We're grateful to David Brinovec for chipping in to the domain name costs.

The Tech Co-op Network directory is created and maintained by members of technology worker co-ops. This year there was an urgent appeal for someone to help out with keeping the domain up. The Data Commons had capacity to react quickly and maintain the domain while the tech co-op network members worked through options for the site's future.

6.3 Investment in infrastructure

The DCC continues to produce basic software for comparing and collaborating on lists kept in spreadsheets and databases. Edwin de Jonge, of Statistics Netherlands, has adapted our [daff](#) software for R, a popular free software environment for statistical computing. Karissa McKelvey, who works on the Dat Project at the US Open Data Institute, has integrated the software for use in visually comparing tabular data. The UK Open Data Institute continues to find application of the work. A large game publisher, Social Point, has also used the tool and contributed to its development. Our software is gaining unexpected popularity in the field of bioinformatics. Development of open data protocols continues apace at dataprotocols.org.

6.4 SolidarityNYC

The Data Commons helped SolidarityNYC get fresh data they had collected deployed to their directory with some useful improvements like tags.



10:32 AM - 28 May 2015