# Data Quality Pro

[**Introduction to the Open Data User Group (UK), featuring Paul Malyon of Experian Data Quality**](http://dataqualitypro.com/data-quality-pro-blog/2012/11/13/introduction-to-the-open-data-user-group-uk-featuring-paul-malyon-of-experian-qas)

[November 08, 2012](http://dataqualitypro.com/data-quality-pro-blog/2012/11/13/introduction-to-the-open-data-user-group-uk-featuring-paul-malyon-of-experian-qas)/ [Dylan Jones](http://dataqualitypro.com/data-quality-pro-blog/?author=4f4a411324acd576e63457d9)



"The Open Data User Group (ODUG) exists to help government understand the requirements of people who are using, or could use, the datasets it collects."

Back in July 2012 the first meeting of the UK [Open Data User Group (ODUG)](http://data.gov.uk/odug) was held.

The ODUG has been created in order to advise the Government on what public sector data it believes will have the greatest economic and social benefits for the UK and should therefore be released as open data.

I recently caught up with one of our expert panel members, [Paul Malyon](http://www.dataqualitypro.com/members/?id=11488907) of Experian Data Quality, to find out more. Paul is one of 13 members of the ODUG, lead by Heather Savory.

**Dylan Jones: How did the ODUG come about Paul, what was the driver for it?**

**Paul Malyon:**In general, there is an overwhelming desire for greater transparency with data that offers more accountability, better involvement and engagement as well as real cost savings – similar to the scrutiny on government spending via the release of COINS data in 2010.

It’s important to note that while the previous releases of data and current release schedules (as detailed by each Government department on data.gov.uk) may have been driven by a combination of reasons, these may not always have been influenced by the end user: the public and companiesbusinesses.

The ODUG was born out of this desire to remove the barriers to entry for businesses and create innovative new services for the public. This said the real reason for the ODUG will be to influence and drive the release of data to give the biggest ‘bang for our buck’ from the opportunities offered by this rich source of information.

So, the ODUG will be concerned with the business case and budget impact of data releases and will weigh up the potential economic and non-economic gains to be had. This is key, as it has been estimated that open data will be worth at least six billion pounds to the UK economy and in terms of new businesses, new opportunities and cost savings for the public sector and the taxpayer, it is simply too good to ignore.

**Dylan Jones: It’s early days I understand but what are some of the near term goals the group are hoping to achieve?**

**Paul Malyon:**Together, with its members who span a variety of sectors across business, civil society, academia, and local government, the ODUG aims to advise on the public sector data that will have the greatest economic impact and social benefits for the UK and should therefore be made ‘open’ to the public.

On a day-to-day level, the group will be the focal point for user community feedback on plans to release further data. It will also act as a main point of contact for the user community to report back on successes, or otherwise, of existing data releases. In terms of direct impact, this means that the cost to public sector bodies of managing and releasing this data needs careful consideration and support – examining data sets and releases will help manage these costs. It also means that citizens will start to see benefits from rapid, direct engagement, as it will give them the ability to, for example, report anti-social behaviour or a broken streetlight right from their smartphone.

**Dylan Jones: Have there been any examples of how Government Open Data initiatives have helped foster new innovation and business growth, some of the key aims I believe the Cabinet Office have in mind?**

**Paul Malyon:**This seems to have been the struggle so far and the proof is obviously in the pudding. I’d recommend that people interested in finding the value so far read the [white paper](http://data.gov.uk/library/open-data-white-paper) that was launched by Francis Maude in the summer.

One area that’s always going to be difficult in this is getting the users of the data to be ‘open’ (excuse the pun) about how they’re using it and the benefits they get for fear of losing competitive advantage. This is something that the ODUG will try and do without damaging trust from our communities.

I’d also suggest looking at data.gov.uk for some of the [apps](http://data.gov.uk/apps) and [case studies](http://data.gov.uk/blog/open-data-case-studies) featured for examples of the social good that the data can create. I know this is not an ideal answer but it’s a difficult question.

For now, it’s a wait and see. With the Open Data Institute starting their work soon, we will hopefully see more of this kind of information being made available.

**Dylan Jones: What is your role in the group, how will you personally be contributing?**

**Paul Malyon:**With the Group still in its early stages, as you say, the next couple of months will focus primarily on pulling together the ‘modus operandi’ to focus on where we can make the biggest impact. For me, this will be about engaging with the communities we represent and identifying the ‘quick wins’ that we can make available in the next 12 months, while ensuring that we work on those datasets that may take longer to release.

In terms of immediate work, we’re reviewing requests made on data.gov.uk and sourcing new requests from the user community (directly through our conversations with partners, customers and other colleagues or, again, via data.gov.uk). This will help us identify key targets for the coming months, which we will then put forward a business case for review and further action by the Data Strategy Board.

My role is to bring the experience I’ve had of creating business cases and products that combine data and software and add the value that appeals to my customers. I also have access to a network of enthusiastic colleagues and clients who are all excited by the opportunities presented. If I can help to identify the datasets, work to simplify the release programme and licensing of public sector data and enable businesses to offer better services more efficiently, then I’ll tick that off as a success.

**Dylan Jones: How can people find out more or contribute to the initiative?**

**Paul Malyon:** If you happen to know me or one my fellow members, get in touch! We’re keen to gather insights on successes so far (or the lack of), new requests for data or get help in defining the value of the potential releases to the UK economy.

You will also be able to request data directly on data.gov.uk with the ODUG reviewing these requests on a regular basis and taking those forward that offer the greatest potential.

If your readers want to find out more, follow @odugUK on Twitter or visit the [data.gov.uk](http://data.gov.uk/) website for our meeting minutes (in an Open format of course!).

## Contributor Bio - Paul Malyon, Experian Data Quality



Paul Malyon, Experian QAS

Paul Malyon is a Senior Product Manager at Experian Data Quality and a member of the [UK Open Data User Group (ODUG)](http://data.gov.uk/odug). He is a keen data innovator and looks for ways to bring value to businesses or positive change to society using the power of data quality tools and reliable reference data. With a BSc in Geography from King’s College London, Paul is a self confessed ‘data geek’ with interests in location data, demographics and the growth of social network influence on businesses and individuals.

Paul blogs regularly on [dataisaproduct.blogspot.com](http://dataisaproduct.blogspot.com/) and can be found on Twitter @PaulMalyonQAS and @PaulMalyon.