

Reflection 01

Why Open Data

The article 'Why Open Data?' makes the case for public open data, specifically government open data. *The Open Data Handbook* defines open data as data that can 'be freely accessed, used, modified and shared by anyone for any purpose'. The article claims that all public data should be open because of the numerous benefits that come from having open data. These benefits include individual and personal benefits, benefits to the economy and benefits to the government itself.

When describing the personal benefits of open data the article cites websites such as findtoilet.dk and vervuilingsalarm.nl. The former uses government open data to allow for the website to display all Danish public toilets, thus helping people with bladder problems find a toilet near them. The latter uses government open data to warn people about air quality in their neighborhood, thus letting them decide if/when they should venture outdoors. The article claims that more information, such as the information provided by these two websites means you can make better decisions about aspects of your life.

To show that the economy also benefits from open data the article explains that the economic value of open data in the EU is worth billions of Euros annually. They also cite the website husetsweb.dk which helps people improve the energy efficiency of people's homes. Finally, the article mentions google translate, who's services are trained on open data EU documents – so the company google clearly benefits from having access to open data.

The article explains that open data benefits the government itself by increasing government efficiency and efficacy thus reducing costs within the government. It uses the example of Dutch Ministry of Education, who, since publishing their education related data have seen a drop in the questions posed to them by the public. Less questions means less workload for workers and thus less costs to the ministry. To demonstrate the efficacy benefits to government from having open data the article

explains that the Dutch department for cultural heritage releases its data and has partnered with amateur historical societies which bolsters the quality of their data and thus reduces costs.

The article concludes by asking the reader to look to the future. It claims that it's impossible to predict how data could become useful in future but from looking at the past we can see that the combination of data and knowledge can lead to new discoveries and benefits to people. They claim that open data has a lot of largely untapped potential and that to benefit and to continue to benefit the world at large all public data should be open data.

References:

<http://opendatahandbook.org/guide/en/why-open-data/>

<http://opendatahandbook.org/glossary/en/terms/open-data/>

<https://okfn.org/about/>