

## Critique-1

Group Information:

Member1: **Sree Rama Raju Pericharla-45**

Member2: **Shanmukha Reddy Aalla-01**

### **Open Data and Civic Apps: First-Generation Failures, Second Generation Improvements**

#### **Summary:**

Using this paper, the authors tried to explain why the data of government agencies are made available for civic apps and what are the drawbacks of the first generation along with how they had improved those in second generation.

The first step in having data of government agencies up and available to public was laid by the U.S. President Barack Obama. He had signed the “Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government” on his first day of office in 2009. The motto of this memorandum was to have a transparency in government and to increase the scope of technology in services using the civic open data. By this open data movement, government planned to pin the code developers not only for transparency but also infuse it into applications, services, and businesses to serve the public in better way.

U.S. chief information officer Vivek Kundra had launched the “Apps for Democracy” contest by the help of iStrategyLabs in Washington, D.C. With the investment of \$50,000 as prize money for awarding winning solutions they got 47 apps created. The estimated cost to develop these apps in traditional procedure is \$2.3million with two years of time but had achieved with in one month because of this contest. So the contest had considered as a big success and the cities like New York and San Francisco followed the similar contests later. *Bold Vision, meager results* are the some of the best apps of the Democracy Contest in 2009.

As this phase is called as first generation and this phase had gone wrong in many cases. Instead of service, the prize money became the key motivation for the participation in the contest and the developers started to come with temporary solutions. Below are the mentioned failures of First-generation.

- Popular datasets are used excessively
- Numerous apps with identical solutions
- Apps from developers with similar interests and demographics
- Prize money became the main criterion and apps developed are insufficient for long term sustainable operations
- The support and adoption by government had been limited with city involvement ending at data publication
- Data transparency had resisted by public administrations

Though the initiatives in first generation had effectively served the purpose, there are a few measures in second generation initiatives had led this to another level in increasing the impact of civic open data. It had increased the exposure to civic needs. A few improvements observed in Second-generation.

- Entrepreneurs and venture capitalist took part of the judging panels to court funding opportunities
- Legislation had made to force civic bodies to publish data in a timely procedure
- Problems published by cities navigate the developer attention directly towards significant operational challenges
- Developers are incorporated in city organizations for better understanding of operations and build reciprocal engagement
- Better management and direct coordination by city administrations
- Ex-ant commitments to support specific apps financially
- Open source code practicing and coordination of data standardization

The overall conclusion of this paper says earlier the study of civic innovation ecosystems had identified the challenges faced by cities in managing and maintaining more diverse groups of collaborators compared to private firms. To overcome this issue open data movement had started and the First-generation initiatives lacked in civic benefit because of loose governance and limited knowledge transfer. But with some improvements Second-generation strategies had stronger management and considerable motivations of external collaborators. With the committed management and compelling incentives Developers can fulfil the purpose.

### **Critique:**

The authors of this paper had done a great research on Open Data and Civic Apps from the scratch. In this paper they had well explained how the First-generation went and its drawbacks. And also mentioned how the improvements of Second-generation helped in Civic apps using open data. The data and conclusions don't contradict each other and look good but the study considering only few points generalized the complete procedure followed by the organizers.

Even the more open data of government agencies will lead us to danger for any wrong usage. And the prize money concept of First-generation had mentioned as wrong motivation but in deed it left many people ended up in taking civic solutions more serious only because of prize money. The Second-generation also has its own flaws which are remained undiscussed. The further study on Second-generation will help a lot in improving more Open Data in Civic Apps in a purposeful manner.

## **Reducing the Software Value Gap**

### **Summary:**

The capability of the IT division of a software company to increase the value of the company is called the Software value gap. Now-a-days most of the companies depend upon the IT services provided by them to run their day to day activities. In these companies, the cost for software exceeds the budget allocated to the IT and it is up to 5 times of the allocated budget. But they cannot allocate unlimited budget to IT, since it may affect the value of the company. So, there are some solutions for these problems.

One of the solutions is:

- Hire more IT employees and contract employees and outsource the projects.

And,

- To implement Agile, Scrum, extreme programming development methodologies.
- Lean techniques to create a frugal IT organization.

There are some problems associated with the typical IT development and maintenance environment.

Analyzing them through the focused Current Reality Tree (fCRT), we can list out the following things.

1. Software solutions development does not create required value for the companies.
2. Requirements are not properly defined.
3. Some Software solutions does not meet needs to the full.
4. No effective focus on values.

And the solutions proposed to overcome these problems are as follows.

Focus on Value:

IT divisions are permanent bottlenecks in the organizations and cannot satisfy all the needs. They should concentrate on service development projects that increases the value for the organizations.

Waste can be avoided:

50% of the IT developers' time is wasted due to rework and incompletely defined needs.

Controlled release:

The Proven practice for improving IT efficiency controlling the release of projects into the systems and release of task to individuals.

So the conclusion is that the Success is easier to get for the improvement of project comes from the CEO or the board of Directors and CEO becomes the owner of the project.

**Critique:**

The Authors have mentioned some of the solutions to reduce the software value gap. But looks like he did not consider few situations into account while doing the same. For example, they have proposed that companies should employ more IT employees and hire contract employees.

This may not solve the problem since contract employees may not have enough knowledge on what their company does or runs on. They have listed few problems that are associated with the building and maintenance of the IT for the companies. But, he analyzed these through a method called fCRT upon which we cannot solely rely on. Also they have given solutions to those problems which are outcome of fCRT process. They have proposed to focus mostly only few software projects which are huge, but there may be some small projects which are extremely important. And they have also mentioned that 50% of the employees' is wasted only due to redoing of the tasks which is purely an estimation but doesn't have any statistical proof. And they have concluded that success rate increases when the CEO and the board members becomes the owners of the project which is not guaranteed unless each and every developer takes responsibility of the tasks they do.