**DCMS ALB Open Data Forum Minutes**

November 2013

**Attendees:**

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| Tom Knight |
| Rich Keyte |
| Ben Horan |
| Krisz Katona |
| Dan Pett |
| Barry Norton |
| Neil Wilson (British Library) |
| Stephen McConnachie (BFI) |
| Emma Quinn (Nesta) |
| John Cummings - (NHM) |
| Vince Smith - (NHM) |
| Caroline Evans – (Ofcom) |
| Chris Harris (Gambling Commission) |
| Bill Thompson (BBC Open Web) |
| Patrick Hussey (RunRiot) |
| Rachel Coldicutt (We Are Caper) |

**Apologies:**

Jane Audas

David Oldman

**Actions:**

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| **Action** | **For** | **Update** |
| **Action 1:**  Arrange follow up meeting for 6th March, with focus on internal messages and the perception of Open Data within organisations | Ben Horan | Second meeting confirmed for April 2014 |
| **Action 2:**  Start commissioning case studies on open data and it’s benefits (BH to look at template for this) | Ben Horan | In progress |
| **Action 3:**  Invitations to be extended to more interested parties – suggestions to be sent to Ben Horan | Ben Horan | Complete |

**Introduction**

Krisz Katona gave an overview of the background of Open data within Government, the Cabinet Office and the Department for Culture Media and Sport’s interest, and the government position on Open Data more generally. She also gave a more personal background to some of the work she’d been involved in recently, and the background and evolution of the data.gov.uk website.

She also welcomed attendees, and introduced Ben Horan and Richard Keyte from the DCMS team, and Tom knight (also DCMS) who chaired the discussion. The other attendees then introduced themselves and said a few words about their particular interest and organisations.

There then followed three presentations on Open Data from representatives of DCMS’s Arm’s Length Bodies (ALBs), explaining their experiences to date, plans for the future and challenges they were facing:

**Presentation 1 – Open and Linked Data in the British Museum**

Barrie Norton gave a very informative presentation on some of the wide range of work being done by the British Museum on Open and Linked data, and some of the organisations both nationally and internationally that they have been working with. This generated a number of questions and discussion by the group.

**Presentation 2 – Open Data and the British National Bibliography**

Neil Wilson gave talk on British National Bibliography (BNB), its background and implications, some idea of the commercial sensitivities involved, and a few thoughts on its relevance and application to the wider sector, particularly organisations which are not quite as far advanced on the open data journey as the British Library.

**Presentation 3 – The British Film Institute: working towards open data**

Steve McConnachie gave a talk on the BFI’s involvement in Open data to date, highlighting their thoughts and direction, and also some of the challenges they have faced and overcome around perceptions of what they hold both internally and externally.

**General Discussion**

Following the three presentations, and an opportunity for questions and wider discussion around the specific topics and experience of the organisations represented, there followed a wider discussion around a number of topics of interest that had emerged during the presentations.

**Data Quality**

Challenges of data quality were discussed as an issue that affects all of our organisations – serves as sounding board checking mechanism

The BFI gave some further information on the internal/external sensitivity encountered in releasing data, and the quality thereof, and the fear that external scrutiny or input will be less authoritative than traditional forms. Also the concern that data could be ‘exposed’ as flawed, rather than seeing the opportunity that this could present to help enhance data.

NHM pointed out that as professional members of the forum would be judged by the quality of their data, but that given the ever increasing scale of data it was no longer possible to ‘own’ it internally as has previously been done.

It was agreed that cultural change would be needed within organisations and the sector as a whole around perception of ownership and potential value of data in order to change this and come to a healthier situation. It was also raised that a ‘Gold standard’ does not currently exist, and is very much a moving target – this is made additionally difficult because of inherent and understandable caution within organisations, and the different backgrounds from which different organisations (and practitioners within these organisations) approach Open data.

KK suggested that this could be a useful task for the forum in future, to begin to formulate what “good” looks like within the field and help organisations to work towards this.

**Deriving Value from Open Data**

The group discussed deriving value from open data, as both important potential revenue stream and also as a potentially strong internal business case for Open Data. The group thought that across the board they seem to have been encountering licencing problems with opening data, particularly when some of that data is from third parties, and so selling becomes complicated. Generally their seemed to be a feeling that clearer central guidance on this would be useful, and this could be something the group could work on, as at present there can be a disconnect between legal advisors and data experts/practitioner.

The possibility of threatening other business models through releasing data was a risk that needs to be addressed and carefully considered, especially when making internal cases for it, but the moving marketplace will inevitably mean that there will be considerable change. As these traditional business models are being/have been overtaken organisations need to (or will shortly need to) look beyond the short term and explore other longer term solutions and their attendant benefits (and risks).

**DCMS**

DCMS covered a few general points about their work in the field, potential interests and areas in which they may be able to offer some assistance. KK also covered a few administrative points about uploading transparency and other data, and also about preference for readable formats for data, particularly in relation to [www.data.gov.uk](http://www.data.gov.uk). As the group had earlier discussed issues around circulation of old data that is corrupted it was suggested that data.gov.uk will be one part of helping solve this by making up to date data more readily accessible via internet searches.

The DCMS team is always interested in for feedback from organisations and individual users about the support they can provide, or any help they could offer, for example in introducing other organisations, or looking to glean knowledge or contacts from across government.

The group agreed it would be interesting to see analytics of data.gov- and to share that get idea of volume of use.

**Future Events**

Finally the group discussed future topics for the Open Data Forum to look at. Suggestions included:

* Networked economy
* Starting to draw up proposals for developing a ‘roadmap’ to developing an industry/sector standard (Rachel Coldicutt)
* Looking at business cases around linked and open data for organisations, and the benefits at all levels
* Looking at opportunities for public/private/third sector collaboration

The next Open Data Forum is planned for 6th March 2014, and an agenda will be circulated beforehand for comments and suggestions – anybody wishing to contribute or present would be very much appreciated and should contact DCMS to discuss arrangements.