

Public Data Group views on the Open Data Institute's Open Data Road Map

The following comments represent initial views from the Public Data Group on the recently published "Open Data Roadmap for the UK – 2015" from the Open Data Institute (ODI) and do not represent the formal view of the Department Businesses, Innovation and Skills. This note sets out comments on the three key strands of the ODI's paper.

On the need to 'continue to build a coherent open data strategy'

There are many sources of open data expertise and examples of good work to support this view from across the public sector. The development of a central co-ordinating role would help to make sure these resources are exploited and shared and will avoid duplication of efforts. PDG members would welcome the opportunity to share their experiences and expertise more widely within the public sector to help drive these expected gains.

Although the digital agenda has a key relationship to the open data agenda we would also suggest that any co-ordination activity involves activities to engage users and businesses. This external activity should also support the creation of a more robust evidence base around open data and in turn will support the development of Government priorities. Ensuring that there is alignment between open data and the on-going work to digitize Government is vital; but it will be important to avoid Government becoming too internally focused.

Open up more data with social, environmental and economic data

We appreciate the ODI acknowledgement that much data has already been released by PDG members. Examples of these include:

- Companies House launch of an Accounts Data Product that allows free access to all statutory accounts filed digitally.
- The Land Registry has made available more than 18 million definitive records of monthly residential property price data – dating back to 1995.
- The Met Office releases a very large amount of open data particularly through their DataPoint service, which makes available both daily and three hourly forecasts, updated hourly, for over 5,000 locations.
- Ordnance Survey has continued to enhance their suite of open data products; which ranges from a street level map to electoral and administrative boundaries.

PDG members are also working in conjunction with their stakeholders to enhance the packages of available open data, examples include:

1. Companies House: Moving to a completely free model for digital products by June 2015.
2. Land Registry: Releasing commercial property data

3. Ordnance Survey: Releasing OS OpenMap, a new Open Water Network product and a new and improved Gazetteer. More details can be found [here](#).

It should be noted that there will always be constraints around personal and sensitive data, and issues caused by the sheer volume of some of the datasets created by government. In order to facilitate the release of data, whilst ensuring the sustainability of the data originators, will require the development of financially sustainable ways to support data collection, refinement and provision.

PDG members agree that the National Information Infrastructure is a vitally important framework, and its evolution offers a powerful way to ensure that awareness and accessibility of the most important public sector data sets is as high as possible. Despite the amount of open data already available it is clear that the Government should continue to promote its availability and encourage its uptake.

On supporting even more re-use of open data

We strongly endorse the need for increased support, in multiple guises, to encourage the growth in use of open data and applaud the ODI's efforts thus far. It is clear that simply making data available is not enough and there needs to be practical and meaningful support available to ensure that the skills and incentives are available to help users across both the public and private spheres.

Within the PDG we have supported the uptake of open data through numerous hacks and events. Examples include the OS Open Data Master Classes and Geovation Challenge programme which have helped to support the creation of 28 (and counting) new ventures. The most recent challenge was a joint project between Land Registry and Ordnance Survey on housing and details on the winners can be found [here](#). Met Office have continued involvement in hacks and events with their third year as lead centre for the NASA Space Apps Challenge.

PDG members are continuing to develop their plans to further support the widespread adoption of open data and all look forward to collaborating with the ODI on these initiatives.