

Sir Nigel Shadbolt (Open Data Institute) – Open data, Innovation and the Economy

Abstract

Why does open data matter? What do we need to do collectively to extract value from open data? What is the evidence that open data has a transformative effect? These and many more are the type of questions the open data community address. Many case studies show the social benefits of opening up data sets and the applications created on the back of this data. 'Open is not a fringe activity' it can be an enormous driver for change; it is the combination of open data, open standards, open licensing, etc. that engages the wider community and creates the greatest value. To acknowledge the value open data presents it needs to be regarded as infrastructure; an infrastructure that is reliable, economic, accurate and trusted, which comes with an investment. What needs to be addressed next is the underlying fundamental data that will drive tomorrow's data infrastructure.

- Realising the value of open data – Why does it matter?; Where is the value?; What do we need to do collectively to extract value?; Where is the evidence that open data has a transformative effect?
- The ecosystem flourishes on free data and the idea to have the fundamental technology openly licensed has accelerated
 - Wikipedia is openly available
 - Linux is an open source operating system
 - The GitHub phenomenon
- Open is not a fringe activity, it drives open innovation
- It is the combination of open data, open standards, and open licenses that engages the wider community
- The so-called data spectrum ranges from closed data, shared data, to open data
 - There are legitimate reasons for not opening up certain data sets, particularly due to privacy reasons
- The UK government has published open data successfully and is top of international leader boards
- Incubated start-ups have the sole purpose of getting benefit/value out of open data
 - For instance, Transport for London open up rail data
 - Applications, such as Citymapper, have been created on the back of this data which have been hugely successful
- There is a need to regard data as infrastructure

- Reliable, economic, accurate and trusted data comes with an investment and it has to be engineered
- Ordnance Survey has spent much time doing this through its Open Data commitment
- The next question that need to be answered is: What is the underlying fundamental data that will drive tomorrow's data infrastructure?
- The Open Data Institute has various case studies on its website that demonstrates the value that can be created by opening up data

Q&A

Big companies are selective of what they make available to 3rd parties which creates silos. What can be done about this?

- These companies need to be shown the value that comes from access to data
- Making information/data public is an argument that is becoming greater.

Open vs free. What does that mean in the context of investment?

Nigel Shadbolt:

- Open generally means free of marginal costs
- Public data has been paid for by the public. What is the cost of maintaining high quality data?
 - Don't charge for the access to the human gene

The sentiment was voiced that:

- but we pay for public data, water, for the use of public infrastructure

What would the argument be that geospatial data should be opened up?

- If we want to run a modern economy, we need to bare that cost

Past supporting innovation through open data, what other examples are there that show the value open data provide?

Nigel Shadbolt:

- The economic value of utilising data holds a more powerful innovation framework
- Data on prescription highlighted huge inefficiencies in the system
- Countries are losing opportunities by not considering open data
- If we want all data to be used we need to make it open and free
- We may have to pay for public infrastructure, but people always prefer what is free

The sentiment was voiced that:

- We need to make services that meet the needs of the end-users; often this is cheaper if it is done by a public body than by the private sector