open
data

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Waag Society @ PICNIC 2011

Open Data so far

During last year's PICNIC, speakers, stakeholders and participants were brought together to discuss the possibilities and implications of Open Data. Over the course of the year, the topic has flourished worldwide and many Open Data initiatives were undertaken, especially in the form of competitions and open data portals.

These have generated lots of momentum: data was unlocked, Apps and websites were built and new policies were discussed at a local, national and international level. However, these initiatives have more often than not lacked a clear vision of the wider goals, second order effects and follow-up. A lot has been found out, but there are still burning questions, like:
- Criticism is limited now, but what does the future look like?
- How do we ensure that non-programmers can also benefit?
- How sustainable are the initiatives that came up?
- Should some data be paid for, and are we okay with that?
- What are the limits of openness and who determines them?

Open Data @ PICNIC
These, and many more questions need to be addressed to prevent the initial enthusiasm from withering. We have to learn from where we stand and we even might need to come up with certain answers that we all agree upon in order to move forward. The PICNIC Open data Unconference is an ideal opportunity to take a closer look at these questions and various Open Data topics presented at PICNIC'11. The accumulated intellectual capital will provide more than enough stimulus for discussion, and the results will be documented. The Open Data Unconference is organized by Waag Society, Creative Commons and PICNIC.

Furthermore, Creative Commons is presenting a session on 'open licensing' and its impact on the open data movement. Many organizations are singing the praises of open data. Even the government is beginning to embrace the value and necessity of opening up data sources. But the actual 'openness' of some of the available data is debatable. Creative Commons Netherlands will look at practical examples and will explore the (legal) implications of opening up data with a panel of interesting speakers.

Harry van Dorenmalen, Chairman of IBM Europe will elaborate on how smart cities harness the power of open data and mass collaboration to engage citizens and solve city issues. By making the data openly available, new business applications will evolve, providing services that are derived from this public sector information. Open Data is also a high priority in the Dutch Digital Agenda. It is a resource for building apps that can lead to innovation and economic growth. At PICNIC, the Dutch Government will announce actions it will undertake to stimulate the availability and use of Open Data.

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