NNIPCamp Columbus, June 19, 2013

Session 1 – when open data comes to town

Led by Bob Gradeck

Notes by Kathy Pettit

Participants: Bob Gradeck, Liza Morehead, Tom Warschauer, Todd Clausen, Eleanor Tutt, Peter Tatian, Mike Schramm, Kathy Pettit

Bob’s question:

Imagine if all your city's data was open tomorrow...

* What would it change?
* What would you do the same?
* What would you do differently?

Tom: For Charlotte’s Quality of Life Indicators, the value ***is*** open data. Convincing other city departments to go along is the challenge. You have to confront fears about agencies being told that they are doing something wrong. You need to create a culture of improving processes and begin to engage people. Seeing it as a continuum of openness helps – smaller steps (and less threatening steps along the way). It’s easy for departments to do better than they were doing before.

 Liza: people expect you to have ALL the data. But there are lots of suburban governments with no data standards ... Our role at PSU is not to correct other people's misuse of data ; they do correct people mis-using **PSU** data.

Mike: we see partners mis-using our data in Cleveland in visuals.

Todd: Milwaukee is already living open data, but Todd's role has shifted. He is geocoding, creating summary statistics, sharing limitations, and insights. He gets out to community meetings and acts as a resource. He has been recruiting community organizers so that there's cross-pollination among skills (designers, programmers). Sees himself as a connector.

Example of on-the-ground insight: There may be 2 neighborhoods with similar actual crime rates - but one has higher reported crime rates because they are very organized reporting all crimes.

Tom: Data should be open because people can tell different stories from same data.

Todd: press has also misuse data to create scandal for governments.

Liza: PSU is the state census center – they have seen Portland’s major paper mis-use data and PSU staff tries to correct it after it happens.

Eleanor: The attitude in St. Louis is about what are our governments hiding from us, rather than interpretation. We have a role to educating, connect, and frame issues.

For example, we can play a role in advocacy around data creation – suggest adding a field in the data that could be very helpful.

St. Louis open data group kickoff is next Tuesday Working with TrailNet to talk about pedestrian/bike accidents - leading with the issue rather than the right to data.

The more informed we can get around issues, the better we can think about what does it take for us to be open.

Peter: there are examples of data been used to harm communities - people remember past abuses

\*What is the definition of Open data - *Governments* being open with their data?

Todd: In Milwaukee, government and private businesses open data (bike share as an example). Kohls has API for its inventory.

Peter: Open data sometimes a religion. The assumption is more data is always better, and there’s no excuse to keep data behind any walls. NNIP partners are labeled "the problem" and open data is the "solution." Could end up as a firehose of data.

Todd: developers have short attention spans, which works in our favor.

Mike: Governments may say they are going to open up data, but they could take a much longer time than they say. No one has had any success in Cleveland.

Todd: There are political and funding issues. Example in his case study of a Compass project that was not updated.

Tom: The technology is coming... we need to give the public information as part of a democracy. They need to be able ask better questions. City agencies need more staff.

Eleanor: She has been uncomfortable at hack meetups, with a different language, conversation. The meeting was about what people would pay for and what would angel investors want tot see.

Todd: At their hackathon around health data, they purposely mixed up groups of people

* How do you foster a constructive conversation between community and developers?
* Open data is dominated by language of coders... We should start to post on forums so that our voices are heard

Kathy: We need to show up to shift the conversation. We should work to shift the focus to the goals of democracy, ad citizen engagement, not open data in itself.

Peter – We should think about what data should be open in which circumstances. For NIDC, access to raw affordable data is not going to be available to download b/c of fear of private developers snatching up properties.

Group agreement – publishing foreclosure/vacancy data could invite crime, scammers, squatters

One questions is how to talk to funders about it

DC Example: KIDS Count - NIDC used to be the research partner. Kids count org decided to use DataKind to do interactive website - event. We failed to show that we are offering something more.