Open Data

Fuel entrepreneurship and innovation and improve government efficiency and effectiveness by unlocking the value of government data and adopting management approaches that promote interoperability and openness of this data.

Open Data Assets

On his first full day in office, President Obama issued the "Transparency and Open Government" memorandum, making clear that his Administration was "committed to creating an unprecedented level of openness," and fostering a sense of transparency, public participation, and collaboration amongst the government and the American people.

Since 2009, the Administration has made significant progress opening up data sets that have never before been public, and creating new pathways to civic engagement. Today, students are able to compare the cost of college with other significant data points, such as graduation rates and average salaries of graduates to determine where to get the most bang for their buck. Communities can map demographic, income, and school data to promote Fair Housing. Patients can find information on the safety and cost of hospitals, nursing homes, and physicians, empowering them to make smarter health care choices. These diverse tools benefit different groups of people, industries, and communities, yet all rely on one thing: open data.

Managing data as an asset and making it available, discoverable, and usable — in a word, "open" — has served to strengthen our democracy, promote government efficiencies, and improve citizens' quality of life. With open data, we identify gaps and look for solutions to the most pressing challenges we face as a Nation. Open data has the power to make our economy grow and our local communities thrive.

Increased inter-agency collaboration, such as cooperation on core metadata standards, increases interoperability and the value addition that data provide. These efforts also benefit from increased agency capacity around data governance and enterprise data inventories. The more agencies share knowledge and practices, the more valuable cross-agency comparisons become as a performance management tool.

Establishing the Open Data CAP Goal

Since 2009, the President has taken action to ensure that government remains effective and innovative for the American public in an increasingly digital world. Notable examples include:

- **January 2009:** Released Presidential Memorandum: "Transparency and Open Government"
- **March 2009:** Hired the first U.S. Chief Information Officer
- **April 2009:** Hired the first U.S. Chief Technology Officer
- **December 2009:** Released Open Government Directive
- **August 2012:** Launched the Presidential Innovation Fellows program
- **May 2013:** Released Executive Order 13642: "Making Open and Machine Readable the New Default for Government Information"
- **May 2013:** Released OMB Memorandum M-13-13: "Open Data Policy—Managing Information as an Asset"
- **January 2014:** Re-launched Data.gov, improving searchability of federal datasets
- **March 2014:** Established Open Data Cross Agency Priority Goal to evaluate federal efforts to open data

- **May 2014:** Published the US Open Data Action Plan
- **February 2015:** Hired the first U.S. Chief Data Scientist
- **August 2015:** Signed an Executive Order to make permanent the Presidential Innovation Fellows program
- **Spring 2016:** Hosted four United States Open Data Roundtables
- **September 2016:** Created the first White House Open Data Summit

Established in 2014, the CAP Goal supports regular open data meetings, where the federal data community workshops technical skills, reflects on success stories, and discusses best practices. The Goal has supported focused outreach to agencies through multiple mechanisms, including (i) CAP quarterly assessment calls, (ii) roundtables on privacy, data quality, applied research data, and public-private collaborations, (iii) the Open Data User Engagement Leadership Series, and (iv) an Executive Transformation retreat with federal data leaders.

The Goal also highlights areas for improvement that digital tools can support. For example, when a CAP Goal progress report revealed challenges agencies faced hosting human-readable data catalogs on their websites, the team at data.gov responded by building a cataloging tool. Similarly, the CAP Goal provides insight into how data users behave through summaries of web analytics pertaining to agency data portals. Finally, improvements to the data.gov/impact page were driven by the CAP Goal, promoting user engagement through open data success stories.

Progress Made to Date

The U.S. Government is creating more data today than at any point in history. Under President Obama's leadership, Federal agencies are making more of that data freely available to the public for use – unleashing nearly 200,000 datasets to date. At the state and local level, governments are finding ways to release data and create platforms to better inform citizens. The private sector is also working on public-private partnerships to release data. And today, open data has given us access to information that can make our lives better and our economy stronger. Through the CAP goal, agencies are opening datasets, documenting them in a common format for improved discoverability, and sharing success stories to further engage the public and other users. Through these efforts, the federal government has set an example that many others have followed, resulting in over 50 non-federal (state, city, county) entities adopting federal open data standards and posting their data to data.gov where they can be integrated more easily with agency resources.

Key Open Data successes include:

- **The Opportunity Project, which aims to improve economic mobility for all Americans.** The Administration launched **The Opportunity Project** (TOP) in March 2016 to catalyze the creation of digital tools that use Federal and local open data to help communities navigate information about resources we all need to thrive, such as quality housing, schools, jobs, and transportation. Through **Opportunity.Census.gov**, TOP provides infrastructure for government - tech sector engagement through the creation of cohorts of tech companies and non-profits, Federal agencies and local communities that collaborate to create tools that address local challenges like connecting unemployed Americans with skills and jobs, helping low income families identify affordable homes near transportation and jobs, and exposing equity gaps between schools.
- **The Police Data Initiative (PDI), which increases transparency and accountability to improve policing outcomes**. The Administration **launched the White House Police Data Initiative** to enable law enforcement agencies to better use data and technology to increase transparency and accountability, and ultimately improve policing outcomes and reduce unnecessary uses of force. More than 50 police departments from across the country have joined the Police Data Initiative, and have released over 150 open data sets on police-citizen interactions (e.g., use of force, traffic and pedestrian stops, and calls for service) in order to build trust with citizens. Additionally, through research partnerships, several of the departments are helping spur innovation in the use of data from body-worn cameras and advanced data analytics to improve police early intervention systems.
- **The College Scorecard, which helps Americans compare college costs and outcomes**. In September 2015, the Administration launched the new **College Scorecard** tool to provide students and families with information on college performance that can help them identify colleges that are serving

students of all backgrounds well and providing a quality and affordable education. The Scorecard is designed to increase transparency, aggregating data from institutions on federal financial aid and tax information and providing insights into the performance of institutions that receive federal financial aid dollars and the outcomes of the students of those institutions. Further, millions of parents use **MyStudentData** to view their child's school records per year. Parents can view demographics, schedules, grades, assignments, tests, attendance, discipline, and transcript data.

Looking Forward

As we move forward to release more and better data to the American public, the federal open data community will continue to improve overall data management. This extends to efforts to improve data governance, to take stock of enterprise data inventories, and to implement better two-way public engagement tools. Open data are an output of good data management, and critical to success in areas like cybersecurity, government services, and internal data-driven decision making.