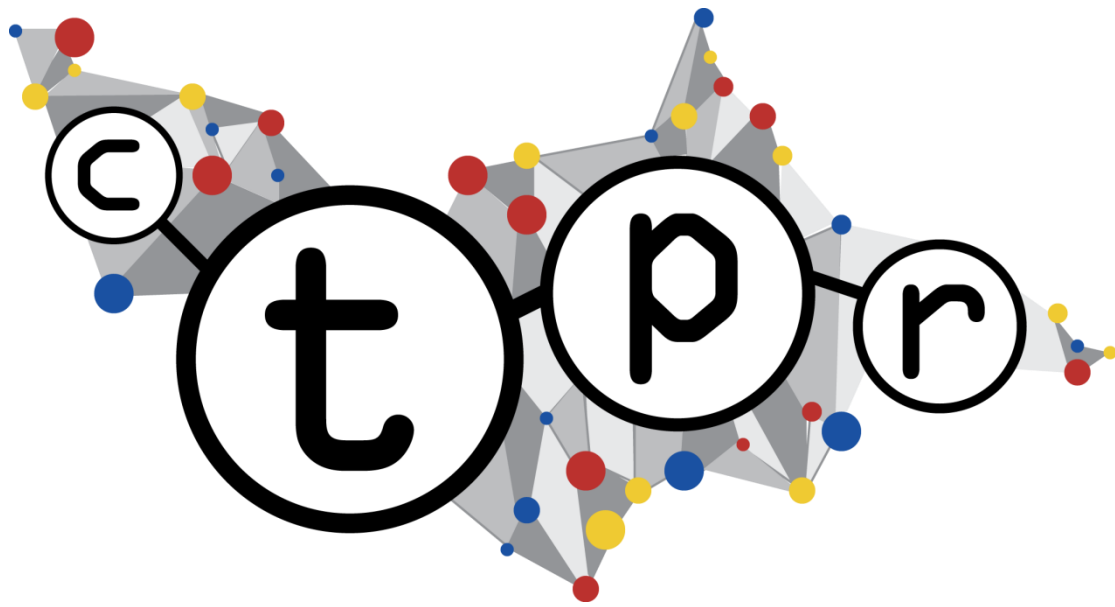


Centre for
Technology Policy
Research



May 2010

OPEN GOVERNMENT
some next steps for the UK

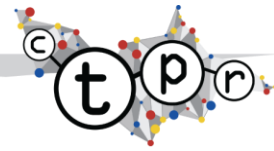


Centre for Technology Policy Research

MAY 2010

OPEN GOVERNMENT

some next steps for the UK



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper aims to serve two purposes: to establish a more widespread understanding of the significance of *open government*, and to provide a clear pathway towards its delivery in the UK.

By *open government*, we mean the commitment to ensure that all aspects of the way that government and public services are administered and operated are open to effective public scrutiny and oversight. Open government will also enable public employees to work in smarter, better informed ways, working from the frontline upwards rather than solely the remote centre downwards.

We propose a consensual, non-partisan set of next steps that we hope will make open government an embedded cultural and technical reality: a series of next steps that will build momentum behind recent initiatives such as the *Power of Information*¹ and the *Rewired State*² to improve the use of public information and re-think our public services.

This paper also reflects in part wider concerns about the reputation of our political system. Restoring reputation requires trust. And openness has a key role to play in helping to re-establish trust.

Whilst open government is not primarily about technology, it is about a **new model of government** only made possible by the Internet age. It's about how government should think and act in the twenty-first century: about establishing a new, stronger and better-trusted relationship between government, citizens and businesses alike. Whilst open government is not some magical panacea for all the problems of public administration and our public services, it is an essential component of reform.

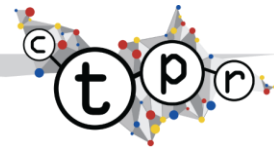
There have been numerous media reports about a disengaged, disillusioned electorate^{3,4}, with younger people in particular feeling isolated from the political process. Open government, with its principles of **transparency**, **participation** and **collaboration**, offers the potential to help reconnect and revitalise the UK's democracy and the way in which government and citizens interact.

¹ http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/reports/power_of_information.aspx

² <http://rewiredstate.org/>

³ http://hansardsociety.org.uk/blogs/press_releases/archive/2010/03/03/mps-expenses-scandal-has-mixed-results-march-3-2010.aspx

⁴ <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/news-and-media/news-releases/electoral-commission-media-centre/news-releases-reviews-and-research/voters-could-miss-out-on-general-election>



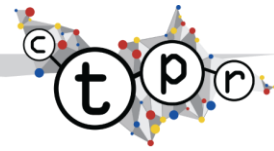
This paper is being published at a time when the UK faces a variety of conflicting demands. The economy is weak, with the UK's budget deficit forecast to rise to up to £178bn this year, and with the total amount of government debt likely to go above £850bn. We face longer-term challenges too, such as an ageing population, climate change and ever-increasing demands on the National Health Service (NHS).

In the light of these challenges, there is a growing cross-party consensus on the **necessity** of government becoming more **efficient**, more **effective** and more **locally responsive** and relevant. The implication of this is profound: that government needs to be re-thought and re-designed for the twenty-first century. Part of this re-design will involve transactional, administrative and informational public services being streamlined and automated wherever possible, whilst ensuring that no citizen is left behind in the digital age.

The UK made strong progress towards establishing the necessary framework for open government in the early 2000s. As well as the **Freedom of Information Act** of 2000, Whitehall developed a range of innovative and world-leading policies and strategies that would have embedded a widespread culture of open government. This earlier approach, later discarded, would have enabled the use of **trusted third parties**, or **intermediaries**, in the delivery of online public services, including associated trust and interoperability models.

President Obama's team has recently adapted some of those UK policies from the early 2000s, particularly in the area of online trust models, the pivotal role of intermediaries and federated authentication. However, unlike the UK, Obama's team has also focused on how to sustain **delivery** and the necessary cultural changes, rather than on the belief that policy alone is a worthwhile outcome in itself. The UK's previous failure in these areas was not so much in its lack of vision and objectives, but in its lack of ability to execute successfully in delivering against them.

These earlier ideas were also overshadowed by later initiatives such as the **Transformational Government** programme, and its out-dated, twentieth century approach of imposed command and control enabled by large central databases. It distracted government from its own policy aspirations and ignored where the technology of the Internet age was heading – towards more localised, autonomous, distributed and consumer-responsive services built around common technical standards.



We need to return to the UK's earlier principles and frameworks. They were built on a recognition that when technology policy and practice is aligned with public policy it can help design better, more appropriate, more responsive public services. But the current approach, of merely throwing expensive technology at existing poor processes, produces only an incremental public sector cost with no benefit. In a time of relative affluence, such waste may have been tolerated. In the current economic climate, it is unacceptable.

The UK's original approach understood that successful reform of our public services would not be determined by government building and designing Websites, but by enabling the use of underlying public data and processes by **third parties**. This was to be achieved through the use of **standardised data formats** and system interfaces.

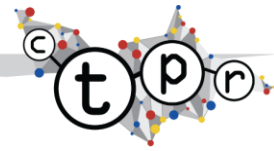
There was some initial success in this area, with third parties streaming government information and making it available in other locations by the early 2000s. For example, details from the DVLA on driving licences and related information were incorporated within commercial portals in their motoring sections, reflecting the idea that government services should be embedded in **multiple channels**, where citizens were more likely to find and use them, rather than on some remote government site. But this early insight was later displaced by the outdated approach of *Transformational Government*, which sought to centralise at a time when both political and technical trends were headed in the opposite direction.

Transformational Government was also driven by the chimera of theoretical “operational efficiency savings”. However, public sector spending instead continued to increase whilst simultaneously witnessing a decline in public sector productivity⁵. Despite a spend of as much as £21bn⁶ per annum on public sector IT, it is difficult to find any compelling examples of direct productivity gains and improved public services. *Transformational Government* was an anachronistic and ultimately ineffective approach from which the UK has only recently begun to distance itself.

Successful open government will rely on an understanding that it is not solely concerned with open data. It also needs to be about open government rule sets, rule engines and processes. Often it is the culture and processes surrounding public services and their

⁵ <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/articles/nojournal/TotalPublicServiceFinalv5.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.computerweekly.com/Articles/2009/02/11/234748/government-has-little-idea-what-public-sector-spends-on.htm>



administration that are inefficient. Making these open to public scrutiny and improvement will be another key benefit of open government. The mindset and philosophy of **open source** needs to be applied across government as a whole, not just within the narrow domain of software. As well as helping improve public services, the consequence could be a shift away from central provision and funding of services from the state to society, with the state continuing to fund essential public-good services where no-one else will.

Another fundamental issue is the extent to which open licensing is made mandatory in any publicly funded project. Greece, for example, has implemented a policy that everything funded by the taxpayer should be **open** unless there is a clear and explicit reason why it should not be. This is being achieved by linking funding conditions to open licensing and procedural practices.

Open government is also as much about government being open to *external* ideas and innovation as it is to making its own information and processes open. It should become a two-way exchange. In the same way that the Internet was designed to be open by default, government too needs to redesign itself to be **open by default**.

This journey will require central government to do what it has not traditionally been good at: to let go. To use the levers of control to reform the public sector by devolving power to a more local, agile and responsive model, made possible by modern technology operating within a common, consistent framework.

The idea of government itself is essentially one of political direction and control over the actions of the citizens of communities, societies, and states. Modern technology enables routine **participation** and **interaction** between government and citizens on a scale that has never previously been practicable. This change needs to be acknowledged. It is both a simple reality, yet profound in its implications. With 70% of households in the UK already online⁷, and more than eight million people using the Internet on their mobile phones⁸, there is clear potential for better use of online delivery of public information and services than in the past, and for the improved and streamlined administration of those services. The biggest change now required is that of a shift to **outcomes**, not specifications and inputs.

⁷ <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?ID=8>

⁸ http://www.ofcom.org.uk/research/cm/cmr09/CMRMain_4.pdf



There is a natural potential alignment between the UK system of government, our long tradition of liberal democracy, and what technology now makes possible. But it will take a **strong political will** and the implementation of a series of practical steps to get there. The compelling current event that will drive real change is, of course, the state of our **economy**.

This paper proposes a series of **recommendations** that we believe will help advance and embed the necessary cultural and technical changes required to help make *open government* an embedded reality in the UK. This is, after all, not about our government and our public services as they currently exist. But how they would be if we were to design them now.

It is in that spirit that this paper aims to add momentum and support to making *open government* a pervasive, routine and sustained reality in the UK.

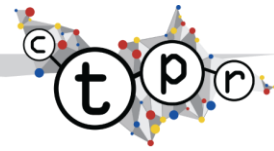
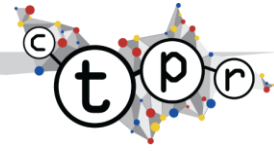


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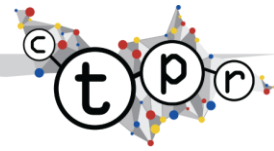


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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This summary of recommended actions to be considered by the new government of the UK is taken from the main text of this paper.

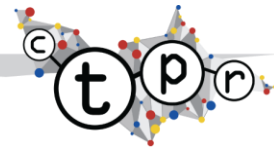
MAKING IT HAPPEN: LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE

LEADERSHIP

1. **Issue a Prime Ministerial edict on open government:** *to set out clear political leadership and vision that learns from the “Obama memo”. A strong direction and political will is needed to drive through the cultural changes necessary to make open government stick. The memo should set out a clear set of guiding principles for all to follow and make clear who will have responsibility and accountability for its delivery.*
2. **Enforce existing policies:** *the existing intermediary strategy, trust and other policies are currently being ignored. They need to be updated, revitalised and enforced, with clarity of responsibility and accountability for their delivery.*

WHITEHALL CULTURE

1. **Impose the same governance regime on Whitehall as exists for private companies:** *the same governance regime should be applied to both private and public sectors. The public sector should be obliged to meet the same standards as private companies: eg. to provide signed-off annual accounts, to keep all transactions on the books (unlike PFI), to detail who sits on the board and their remuneration packages, to show the return on investment of IT expenditure, etc. This level of consistency around openness will help re-establish trust and entrench better cultural values.*
2. **Audit outcomes not process or inputs:** *audits must focus on whether the intended policy outcomes for public services are being achieved, not whether arbitrary processes are being followed. Hold people and organisations responsible for outcomes, but let them innovate and find their own ways of achieving those outcomes.*
3. **Update and mandate the existing public sector intermediary policy:** *to empower locally delivered services through citizens’ choice of channel. Ensure all Permanent Secretaries and their leadership team and staff are aware of their obligations*
4. **Listen to and act on the needs of the frontline:** *policy and business planning must demonstrate that it collects and acts on feedback from citizens, frontline employees, local authorities and related third party organisations. The focus should move to services delivered locally through citizens’ channel of choice, not on centrally imposed ideas about what may or may not work*
5. **Open up access to social media and networking tools for civil servants:** *this is where many citizens and businesses now live and communicate and participate. Without access to these important new tools, central government is running blind from those it is there to serve.*

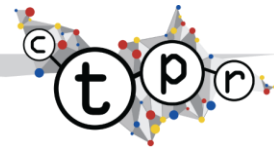


6. **Adopt the approach taken in the private sector to informed self-help:** *empower knowledgeable civil servants to be active in community forums (such as those relating to tax and benefits) and help resolve issues that citizens and businesses face – longer term this will also help build up a self-help repository. Look at and learn from online community forum models.*
7. **Employ real-time communications for online government services:** *offer a “live chat” facility for online users as part of the move to multi-channel delivery of public services and to avoid the next stage always being referral to a call centre. Learn from commercial models such as that used by BT.*
8. **Switch expenditure from marketing and PR to openness:** *consider redirecting those public funds currently spent on marketing and PR into the provisioning of data and the tools to analyse them and their associated business processes.*
9. **Introduce a new civil service risk/reward model:** *the change in culture in the civil service required for truly open government to happen should be encouraged through appropriate incentives in the way that they are recognised and rewarded. Reward innovation and successful risk management, not risk avoidance.*
10. **Establish and maintain a public open government dashboard:** *to show a clear, prioritised list of what will be made available and when, who is responsible/accountable and progress against delivery using a traffic light system (red, amber, green)*
11. **Make Permanent Secretaries accountable and responsible for meeting the agreed outcomes for their respective departments:** *without accountability and responsibility, delivery does not happen*
12. **Establish regulatory co-ordination points across the various departments and agencies of government:** *to ensure consistency in the rules that facilitate open government policies*

MAKING IT HAPPEN: TECHNOLOGY POLICY

OPEN GOVERNANCE

1. **Create a new departmental Board-level, business-led CIO function:** *able to advise on technology's role in the re-design of the UK's public services.*
2. **Introduce compulsory training in technology policy and technology for all senior civil servants.**
3. **Introduce open data / information management crash courses for civil servants of all levels**
4. **Integrate technology in public sector planning documents:** *don't publish separate, isolated documents that talk about IT as if it is justified in its own right.*



OPEN ARCHITECTURE

1. **Design a business architecture for UK public services:** *one designed for the twenty-first century that provides a clear basis on which open government can be delivered.*

OPEN PROCUREMENT

1. **Open up the procurement process:** *openly publish details of all contracts, contractors and costs by default.*
2. **Implement competitive bid reviews for procurements:** *and clearly identify and explain all sole-source procurement decisions on the relevant website*
3. **Implement procurement mandates:** *mandate open data and APIs as a fundamental requirement of all procurements (new and in process)*
4. **Use the Internet for commodity services not proprietary/bespoke in-house alternatives:** *use free assets (such as Facebook, WordPress, Office Live, etc) DON'T specify and procure bespoke versions for citizen interactions.*
5. **Link procurement contracts and other public sector funding initiatives to open licences:** *include specific provisions linking the award of contract to the use of open licensing unless there is a compelling and specific reason for keeping all rights reserved.*

MODERNISATION AND SIMPLIFICATION – REDESIGN OF PUBLIC SERVICES

1. **Include designers in public sector projects and programmes:** *to help design the end-to-end process as existing, inefficient approaches are replaced*
2. **Fund and develop the role of ground-up “redesigned state” design-focused events:** *modelled on the successful “rewired state” approach. Consider hybrid events that bring geeks and designers together in new and unexpected ways.*

PUBLIC DATA

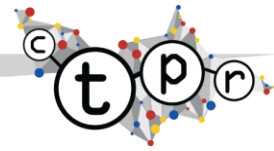
1. **Require the default open publication of data, interfaces and processes in all current and future procurements**

PRIVATE DATA

1. **Deliver two volunteered personal information prototypes:** *(cross-organisational in nature) to establish a new culture and technical approach to the handling of personal data*

PRIVACY AND SECURITY

1. **Mandate the principle of privacy by design:** *in the same way that security engineering is already embedded throughout the lifecycle of public sector projects.*
2. **Review, modernise and streamline the existing security regime:** *removing any protective markings by default wherever possible. This will enable the use of open tools where currently they are prevented by over-zealous markings of documents and information that is not in fact restricted or confidential. Implement more effective security and privacy controls on those limited number of areas where protective marking and handling of information is a necessity.*



3. **Undertake ongoing risk analyses of aggregated public data sets and their potential impact on privacy:** *an expert panel should be established to review and develop mandatory privacy enhancing techniques and technologies to minimise the risks to privacy from the publication of open data.*
4. **Implement a Privacy Commons:** *to ensure consistency of privacy standards across the public sector, and between sectors.*

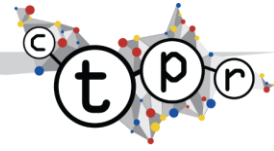
OPEN STANDARDS

1. **Update existing policy documents relating to open standards and interoperability⁹:** *this should be done as a continuing, collaborative, participatory exercise between government and the private and voluntary sectors.*
2. **Mandate direct.gov.uk to provide open data and open API services:** *to enable third parties to freely access and provide government data and transactional services in a consistent and reliable way and to compete with direct.gov.uk itself (it should not be a monopoly/monolithic provider)*
3. **Mandate the Government Gateway to support third party identifiers:** *and the use of multiple identifiers, whilst providing single sign-on to public services. The Government Gateway was always designed to support third party identifiers. This work needs to be revitalised, with a range of third party identity issuers actively encouraged to ensure they work with online public services, providing choice for citizens and businesses alike, and open interoperability at the technical level.*

OPEN SOURCE

1. **Implement a system to receive unsolicited suggestions for free and open source software tools and software that can help them accomplish their missions**
2. **Encourage civil servants and public sector contractors to participate in open source software development initiatives:** *where such efforts contribute to the government mission*
3. **Implement policy guidance promoting the identification and removal of any improper barriers to the effective development and use of open source software**
4. **Mandate the routine, open sharing of taxpayer-funded software source code and associated design documents across government and with the public**
5. **Open source government's operational models, rules engines and other related processes:** *to provide open public scrutiny, feedback and improvement*
6. **Use and accept open file format standards for all external communications**

⁹ See <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/govtalk/policydocuments.aspx>

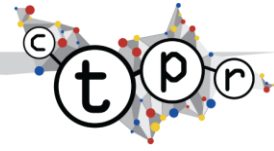


OPEN LICENSING

1. **Mandate open licensing as the default government licence:** *the existing OPSI review of licensing must be expedited and a timescale committed to where UK uses of information, processes and related tasks become freely available within a harmonised licensing framework.*

OPEN.GOV.UK

1. **Establish a single “open government” site (open.gov.uk?):** *to provide a single entry point to all open government initiative resources and sub-sites (such as data.gov.uk)*
2. **Implement a comprehensive open government repository on the “open government” site:** *under each sub-section of transparency, participation, collaboration with all associated resources, links, blogs, feedback mechanisms*



HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

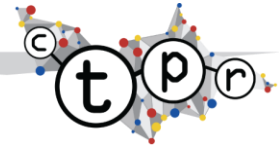
This paper has two main parts:

- a discussion of what open government means and its potential implications
- a discussion and set of recommendations to help establish a clear pathway towards its delivery in the UK.

We hope you will have time to read all of this paper. But if you are already familiar with the topic, you may want to skip the discussion of what open government means and the examples, and instead go directly to the section that discusses some next steps for the UK, starting on [Page 32](#). It is from this section that the [Summary of Recommendations](#) on [Page 9](#) is taken.

The background discussion of what open government means and its potential implications comes first – and has [green page headers](#). It starts on [Page 15](#).

This is followed by the [next steps](#) discussion. It has [red page headers](#) and starts on [Page 32](#).



AN INTRODUCTION TO OPEN GOVERNMENT

The potential for modern information technology (IT) to improve and modernise the UK's approach to the administration and delivery of our public services has long been recognised. But that potential is little realised. The UK's current approach has failed to deliver the ambitious improvement in public services and administration foreseen in the 1990s.

There is a growing awareness that the UK public sector is also out of step with the main driving force of our age: the Internet. With its basis in a decentralised and distributed model, the Internet is driving a fundamental change in the way that citizens can interact with businesses, the state and each other.

Society's use of the Internet and government use of the Internet are largely polarised. The public sector is behind the curve, not just in terms of its understanding of technology but more fundamentally because the potential implications for the way in which modern public services can be administered and operated is insufficiently understood at the political and policymaking level.

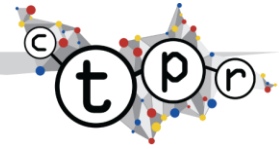
As Matthew Burton writes:

"Imagine not having a Google to quickly find information; no Facebook or LinkedIn to find new colleagues; no instant messaging to communicate with those colleagues once you found them. Imagine having to ask for permission every time you wanted to publish content online, instead of being able to do it quickly and easily with a wiki or weblog."¹⁰

Yet that succinctly describes the current state of Whitehall.

Whilst there has been some limited progress with implementing online public services, the challenge now is more fundamental: if government is going to take a real advantage from IT, it also needs to re-think and re-design how it operates. It needs to change its culture and behaviour: to become truly **open**. Not just by opening up public data and information, but processes too. Government needs to rediscover its original purpose: to reposition itself as the ultimate public enabler, arbiter and mediator of policy and regulatory frameworks. But rather than build, own and operate everything itself, it

¹⁰ Burton, M. A Peace Corps for Programmers. In "Open Government", p1.



needs to enable frontline public sector employees, citizens, intermediaries and businesses to become active partners in the public service ecosystem.

Tim O'Reilly has suggested that government needs to become an **open platform**¹¹ – one that enables people inside and outside of government to innovate, and to move away from what has been termed “*vending machine government*”¹². He challenges the idea that we have to choose between government either providing services itself to citizens, or leaving everything to the private sector, as a false dichotomy. Instead, he sees Internet technologies as a means of enabling us to rebuild a more effective model of participatory government, quoting a letter from Thomas Jefferson which foresaw a model where “*every man ... feels that he is a participator in the government of affairs, not merely at an election one day in the year, but every day.*”¹³

Open government can enable our public services to be re-cast as:

- inclusive
- outcome-focused
- centred on the citizen not the provider (with citizen data under citizen control; and public data openly available for all)
- enabled by technology from the moment of conception (not for technology to be used solely as an administrative contractual tool)

The UK set out on a promising journey in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Some of the existing policies from that era – such as the **intermediary policy** and the **trust framework**, together with the **interoperability programme** – made sense then and they make sense now¹⁴.

They need to be revitalised.

In “*Electronic Government Services for the 21st Century*”¹⁵ for example, government outlined several key policies:

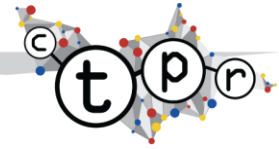
¹¹ *Government as a Platform*. pp11-39 in “*Open Government. Collaboration, Transparency and Participation in Practice*”. O’Reilly, 2010.

¹² *The next government of the United States: why our institutions fail us and how to fix them*. Kettl, D. Norton, 2008.

¹³ *Government as a Platform*. p12 in “*Open Government. Collaboration, Transparency and Participation in Practice*”. O’Reilly, 2010.

¹⁴ See <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/govtalk/policydocuments.aspx>

¹⁵ Performance and Innovation Unit, September 2000



"... as the private and voluntary sectors act as intermediaries between the citizen and the state, government can reduce expenditure on its delivery channels. Secondly, there will be real competition as soon as government allows access to its information, with the expected benefits to the citizen." (p.35)

And:

"This vision of a mixed economy delivery market offers significant benefits to the consumer. These arise for two key reasons:

- *it will create competition to drive up quality for the citizen and reduce costs; and*
- *new value-added intermediaries will provide more customer-focused services."* (p.60)

These aspirations to redesign the public sector were underpinned by a variety of more detailed policy documents, including:

- intermediary strategy
- channels framework
- eGovernment Interoperability Framework (eGIF)
- metadata
- XML schema

Those early policy documents (which are still available and which still appear to be current policy¹⁶) need to be both updated, and, more importantly, delivered: they are the seeds from which a modern, successful and re-designed UK state can be nurtured.

More recently, there has been the powerful momentum provided by the [Power of Information](#)¹⁷ work and the launch of [data.gov.uk](#), opening up public data in a systematic way. These need to be built upon and momentum maintained and accelerated. Updating and enforcing these earlier key policy documents will be an effective way of working towards a more comprehensive and sustainable model of open government in the UK.

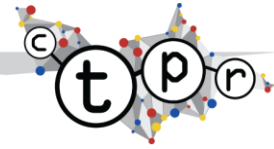
The [Power of Information](#) and [data.gov.uk](#) are just a glimpse of what is possible if we put our minds to it.

DEFINITION OF OPEN GOVERNMENT

Open government is a commitment to ensure that all aspects of the way that government and public services are administered and operated are open to effective public scrutiny and oversight. Within government, it enables public employees to work in smarter,

¹⁶ <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/govtalk/policydocuments.aspx>

¹⁷ http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/reports/power_of_information.aspx



better informed ways, working from the frontline upwards rather than the remote centre downwards.

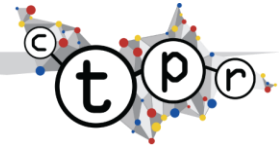
More recently the open government concept has become associated with IT. Modern technology is the enabler that automates the release and publication of information and processes essential to the design and operation of open government. But to deliver an effective open government policy requires clear political leadership and direction, with technology policy aligned to deliver against those wider policy objectives. Technology in itself will not necessarily advance the cause of open government unless it is properly led and managed.

The idea of transparency is seen as a key principle to help eliminate waste. In the UK, this principle is already being explored at a local level. For example, the [Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead](#) publishes online details of all contracts it has placed over £500 in value. It is also publishing real-time information about the energy use of its estate based on the use of smart meters. The result has been that energy consumption has already fallen by 15%, an outcome attributed to making the information open in the first place and hence encouraging council workers to be more aware of unnecessary energy use.

At a wider level, the concept of open government anticipates that all public data should be openly published and made available not only for scrutiny and review, but potential re-use. In the US, President Obama defined this by stating that in terms of the culture underlying the commitment to freedom of information there is *“a clear presumption: in the face of doubt, openness prevails”*¹⁸.

This is a major cultural shift, where the default assumption is that all public data is openly published and only held back by exception. The current situation in the UK remains largely the reverse, where data is generally not published and is only made available after specific requests and also often only under onerous licensing conditions. Open government involves a move from the right to request access to information to the automatic right to know, the automatic publication of public data.

¹⁸ http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Freedom_of_Information_Act/



In support of such a cultural shift, eight open data principles were set out at a 2007 meeting of open government advocates in Sebastopol California¹⁹. These advocates believe that government data should be considered open only if it is made public in a way that complies with the principles below:

1. *Complete - All public data is made available. Public data is data that is not subject to valid privacy, security or privilege limitations.*
2. *Primary - Data is as collected at the source, with the highest possible level of granularity, not in aggregate or modified forms.*
3. *Timely - Data is made available as quickly as necessary to preserve the value of the data.*
4. *Accessible - Data is available to the widest range of users for the widest range of purposes.*
5. *Machine processable - Data is reasonably structured to allow automated processing.*
6. *Non-discriminatory - Data is available to anyone, with no requirement of registration.*
7. *Non-proprietary - Data is available in a format over which no entity has exclusive control.*
8. *License-free - Data is not subject to any copyright, patent, trademark or trade secret regulation. Reasonable privacy, security and privilege restrictions may be allowed.*

In Vancouver, David Eaves has set out *The Three Laws of Open Government Data*²⁰:

1. *If it can't be spidered or indexed, it doesn't exist*
2. *If it isn't available in open and machine readable format, it can't engage*
3. *If a legal framework doesn't allow it to be repurposed, it doesn't empower*

Yet this should not solely be a discussion about the use of public data. Open government is not just about open data. It also needs to be about open government rule sets, rule engines and processes.

Open government represents a fundamental shift in the way that the UK government needs to think about its role and the way it functions, both internally and externally. Open government is about the public sector embracing the Internet age and using it as effectively as the best of what has already been achieved in the commercial sector.

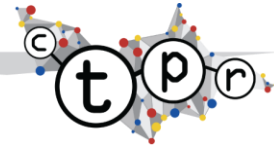
CHARACTERISTICS OF OPEN GOVERNMENT

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The US has seen a strong recent emphasis on open government. On his first day in office, President Obama issued a memo entitled the *Open Government Initiative* committing his administration to “*unprecedented levels of openness in Government*”. This memo defined three key principles, which together are about building trust:

¹⁹ http://resource.org/8_principles.html

²⁰ <http://eaves.ca/2009/11/29/three-laws-of-open-data-international-edition/>



- **Transparency:** *to enable greater accountability, efficiency, and economic opportunity by making government data and operations more open*
- **Participation:** *to create early and effective opportunities to drive greater and more diverse expertise into government decision making*
- **Collaboration:** *to generate new ideas for solving problems by fostering co-operation across government departments, across levels of government, and with the public*

The memo tasked the Chief Technology Officer, together with the Office of Management and Budget and the General Services Administration, with creating recommendations for a directive on open government within 120 days. Part of the goal was to “*experiment with mechanisms for effective citizen participation in order to complement the know-how of government employees with the expertise and intelligence of the American people*”.

The US open government initiative has its own website²¹. This includes a dashboard to show how well each government entity is doing against a set of clear criteria (for example, whether they have registered three high-value data sets and enabled a citizen feedback mechanism). Underpinning this strategic commitment are a series of pragmatic steps to ensure delivery, some of which have already been copied in the UK. Notable amongst the US initiatives are:

- Data.Gov
- Federal IT Dashboard
- Identity and Authentication
- Apps.Gov
- Forge.Mil and Other Developments

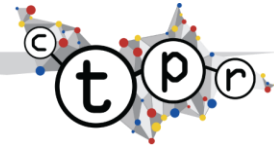
US initiatives, such as its recovery site²², further deliver on the commitment to transparency through the smart use of IT.

Other countries have also been adopting a more open approach. In Australia, the release of open data has led to a whole variety of applications including crime maps and identifying problems with public infrastructure.

In Greece, the government mandates the use of open licensing in publicly funded projects. Everything funded by the taxpayer must be open unless there is a clear and explicit reason why it should not be. This is achieved by linking funding conditions to

²¹ See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/Open>

²² <http://www.recovery.gov/Pages/home.aspx>



open licensing and procedural practices. Greece is also ahead in terms of its thinking about how open data strategies can be used in order to enforce more rigorous statistical collection and representation, since their checking will be much more transparent.

Sweden has a long pedigree in Freedom of Information legislation stretching back 200 years. Many Swedes feared that on joining the EU in 1995 they might be pressed to conform to Europe's more secretive culture. So seriously was this felt that Sweden attached a remarkable declaration to its accession agreement, stating that access to official documents, and the protection of journalists' sources, "*remain fundamental principles ... of Sweden's constitutional, political and cultural heritage*". However, the existing member states countered this "*unilateral*" declaration, with their own, noting that they "*take it for granted that ... Sweden will fully comply with Community law in this respect*".

Recently Opengov.se has been created to highlight available public datasets in Sweden. It contains a commentable catalogue of government datasets, their formats and usage restrictions. Some 15% of datasets are now available with an open licence and in at least one open format. At the technical level, information about datasets is available in RDF/XML.

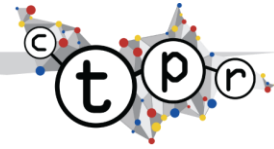
In the European context, the [Public Sector Information Directive](#)²³ is the most important regulatory vehicle for opening up government services. Whilst implementation varies from country to country, it is a significant step towards a general assumption of transparency of public information in member states.

In the UK, and despite many problems of access to official data and interfaces, initiatives such as [MySociety](#)²⁴ and the [Rewired State](#)²⁵ have trail-blazed successful services – such as enabling citizens to notify their local councils of problems where they live (from faulty street lights to pot holes) and to communicate more easily with their constituency MPs.

²³ http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/policy/psi/index_en.htm

²⁴ <http://www.mysociety.org/>

²⁵ <http://rewiredstate.org/>



A significant role can also be played by visualisations of public data (as in the case of “*Where does my money go?*”²⁶). These can help complex data become more accessible to a wider public audience. They also help ensure transparency and good data collection processes in order to construct the visualisations. And, in the case of “*Where does my money go?*”, they can provide a simple and easy-to-read picture of the finances of the state to the citizen.



FIGURE 1: VISUALISATION - A KEY TOOL IN UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC DATA

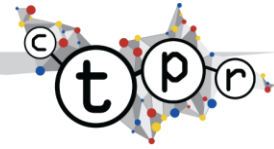
TRANSPARENCY

The trend towards more transparent government is aimed at achieving both greater efficiencies and improved accountability. The **Freedom of Information Act** of 2000 started the move in the UK towards improved availability of official documents. And the recent launch of data.gov.uk in the UK has started a similar move towards the release of public data to the Internet.

The outcome of the improved availability of such information should both help increase accountability as well as providing a spur towards innovative and new uses of such data. In the US, for example, which is ahead of the UK in this area, open data from their **National Weather Service** is reported to have stimulated a multi-billion dollar weather forecasting industry. And other sites, such as **Clean Scores**²⁷, publish the environmental health inspection scores of restaurants.

²⁶ <http://www.wheredoesmymoneygo.org/prototype>

²⁷ <http://www.cleanscores.com/>



The combination of open access and open data underpin the concept of open government, helping in turn to make government more efficient. Government needs to be more agile in making use of modern technologies. This will only happen when it changes its current models of governance, architecture and procurement and embraces the more modular and more flexible technologies of the twenty-first century.

Cultural and economic investment is going to be required to move the existing professional and technical capabilities of the civil service to the necessary levels. But this will be assisted by a recognition that many of the best ideas and use of technology will come from outside, rather than from inside, government. It is about a new partnership between citizen and government – about government being as open to ideas from outside as it is to opening up its own working to outside scrutiny and participation.

The current data.gov.uk initiative has provided some welcome early evidence that the culture of the civil service is already changing. This is to be encouraged. The move away from the presumption of secrecy to one of openness is significant. The risk, reward and accountability model for civil servants needs to recognise this cultural shift and ensure that these important cultural changes are encouraged to reinforce the right behaviour during the transition.

There is also a significant political dimension to the routine disclosure of all public information. Only recently there have been sharp political divisions over the interpretation of violent crime statistics. This has been complicated by the fact that the way these crime statistics are compiled was changed in 2002. The Conservative Shadow Home Secretary claimed that violent crimes had increased during the tenure of the Labour government (from 1997 onwards). The Labour government asserted that this was not in fact the case – and that the Shadow Home Secretary had not taken sufficient account of the re-baselining of the data. However, when the [House of Commons Library](#) undertook an independent review of the information, they found that in fact violent crime *had* increased during the period in question²⁸.

²⁸ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/politics/lawandorder/7400372/True-scale-of-violent-crime-rise-revealed.html>



Genuinely open public information will increasingly present political challenges. Headlines such as “*Labour hid ugly truth about National Health Service (NHS)*”²⁹, alleging that information regarded as potentially politically damaging was deliberately kept concealed, could be replaced by a stream of evidence-based disclosures. In an age where information becomes open by default, rather than requiring a **Freedom of Information (Fol)** request, it could become politically harder to spin propaganda and gain political advantage from baseline statistics.

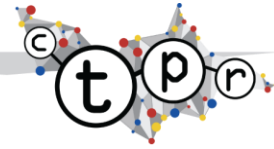
In contentious and disputed areas of public interest, such as the recent Nimrod inquiry, important questions need to be answered about what public data would be made available *by default* in the future? Where is the “*automatic release of information*” line drawn versus the “*request for information*” line? Genuinely open government will involve ceding political control of public data to an extent not seen before in the UK.

Political use and interpretation of public data is, of course, not going to go away. Neither is the need for a politically independent, professional body, such as the Office of National Statistics (ONS). But the routine disclosure of public data, including the rules and processes used to assess it, may make it more difficult in the future for any political party to gain a propaganda advantage from its release. Whilst this will challenge existing political practice, it may also be a useful step towards regaining public trust of government and politicians.

Transparency will also impact the current audit regime, opening up far wider public scrutiny of decisions and related costs. At present audit functions in government largely concentrate on process compliance (in particular, procurement and legal process). The House of Commons **Public Accounts Committee (PAC)** does attempt to look at departmental outcomes (such as its work on the Defence Equipment programme), but is often unaware of the questions that need to be asked in order to elicit an insightful reply. Greater transparency and a two-way interaction with citizens may well help enable improved precision of audit-related questions and inquiries.

The general level of public sector accountability could be increased by the publication of government performance data in open machine-readable formats without the restrictive licensing conditions currently imposed. Arguments are often advanced that

²⁹ Sunday Times, March 7, 2010, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/health/article7052606.ece>



the provision of data in such a manner will tie up valuable resources with the answering of trivial and malicious questioning. Whilst there may be a short term impact, longer-term the civil service will be able to release a large number of bureaucrats engaged in producing reports to more valuable service delivery roles. The role of technology in automating this process and facilitating citizen engagement is fundamental.

PARTICIPATION

Government has a clear objective to ensure that the Internet age does not disenfranchise or disadvantage elements of the population. However, it also has a need to balance the most efficient way of administrating and delivering public services. With 70% of households in the UK already connected to the Internet³⁰, and more than eight million people using the Internet on their mobile phones³¹, online services are an increasingly routine way of life. Where citizens themselves are either unable or unwilling to use online public services, they need to be able to interact with and take advantage of them through other means, such as via local authority offices, public libraries or other trusted intermediaries able to assist them.

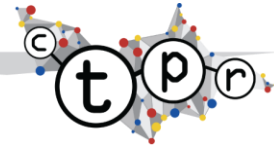
People only adopt new technologies and ways of working if there is a clear advantage to incentivise them. Government will need to re-examine its approach to equality if it is to make progress. Providing incentives for citizens to use lower cost, technology-based channels to access services will release funding to improve the experience for those that are reliant on traditional, manually-intensive interactions with government.

The era of one-way design of public services – where the supply-side (government) decides what is needed and then pushes out its services based on that assessment, is fundamentally challenged by the two-way, more collaborative and communicative nature of modern technology. The once every 10 years UK National Census³², for example, looks increasingly out-dated and irrelevant in an age when people have become accustomed to the constant feedback and interaction mechanisms available on the Internet via services such as email, e-commerce, instant messaging and social networking. It's hard to think of any other enterprise that would work on the basis of

³⁰ <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?ID=8>

³¹ http://www.ofcom.org.uk/research/cm/cmr09/CMRMain_4.pdf

³² <http://www.ons.gov.uk/census/index.html>



undertaking major market research just once every 10 years. It's government through the rear-view mirror.

In the USA, the Whitehouse [open government](#) initiative has pioneered direct citizen participation and feedback during the formulation of policy in areas such as plans to deploy smart meters, how to improve the government regulatory regime and the national broadband plan³³. This is a move towards a more continuous and inclusive participation of the population at large in government policy and decision-making. The idea of [co-creation](#), where services are designed collectively by provider and consumer alike, and in an inclusive, participative way, is a powerful potential component of open government.

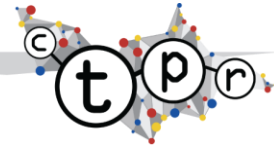
The Dutch have developed an [e-Citizen Charter](#) that aims to improve information exchange, service delivery and interactive participation by establishing a new partnership between citizen and government, achieved by giving more responsibility and choice to citizens. It sets out 10 requirements for digital contacts:

1. [Choice of communication channels: counter, letter, phone, e-mail, internet.](#)
2. [Transparent Public Sector: citizens know where to apply for official information.](#)
3. [Overview of Rights and Duties: the rights and duties of citizens are transparent.](#)
4. [Personal information service: tailored information, personal internet site.](#)
5. [Convenient Services: citizens only have to provide personal data once to be served in a proactive way.](#)
6. [Transparent procedures: openness and transparency of procedures.](#)
7. [Digital Reliability: secure identity management and reliable storage of electronic documents.](#)
8. [Considerate administration: government compensates and learns from mistakes.](#)
9. [Responsible management: citizens are able to compare, check and measure government performance³⁴.](#)
10. [Involvement and empowerment: the government stimulates participation and involvement of citizens.](#)

A variety of innovative, independent initiatives in the UK have helped provide a more participative way of thinking about public services, ranging from [Patient Opinion](#) through to [FixMyStreet](#) and [TheyWorkForYou](#). Not only can such approaches help to refine and improve public services, but they can also help provide much more timely feedback to enable corrections to the wider policymaking process. We may not yet be at

³³ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/open/activities>, retrieved 02.03.2010

³⁴ Although we think the ability to check **outcomes** is more important



the stage of real-time government, but the direction of travel is clear and needs encouragement.

[Patientopinion](http://www.patientopinion.org.uk/)³⁵ for example illustrates how an independent, not-for-profit social enterprise can help improve public services. It provides a Web-based service that enables patients and carers to find out what other people think of local hospitals, hospices and mental health services; to share stories of what has happened to them or their family when they were ill; and for patients and carers to tell it like it is. It recognises that patients and carers are best placed to know what health services are actually like and to come up with ideas about how they could be improved. It helps ensure that such feedback finds its way to the right people inside the NHS, so that changes can be made to the benefit of all.

[FixMyStreet](http://fixmystreet.com)³⁶ provides a Web-based service that lets citizens report details of a problem in their local area, such as a pothole in the road, defective street lamp or graffiti on a wall. The site enables citizens to enter a nearby postcode (or street name and area), indicate where on a map the problem is, provide details of the problem and then entrust [FixMyStreet](http://fixmystreet.com) to notify the relevant local council of the problem.

[TheyWorkForYou](http://www.theyworkforyou.com)³⁷ provides improved transparency and democracy online. The site brings together content from Hansard of the House of Commons, House of Lords, Scottish Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly, together with details about MPs, their interests, voting records and election results. It also enables a way of communicating more easily with MPs.

The [UK Parliament](http://www.parliament.gov.uk) is also reported³⁸ to be looking at improving participation by trialling a new way of publishing proposed legislation, making it easier for the public to understand the impact of new laws.

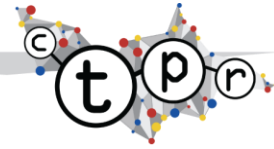
These initiatives should be encouraged by government. However, public sector organisations sometimes decide to compete with or displace ground-up services, rather than seeing them as vibrant examples of the intermediary, participative model in practice. In the early 2000s, for example, various third-party self-assessment tax

³⁵ <http://www.patientopinion.org.uk/>

³⁶ <http://fixmystreet.com>

³⁷ <http://www.theyworkforyou.com>

³⁸ <http://www.computing.co.uk/computing/news/2258465/parliament-improve-online-law>



packages, such as Digital TaxSaver, were encouraged in the marketplace, taking advantage of open government interfaces and data formats. However, the market was effectively undermined by central government providing its own, competitive services online. Unlike in the US, where such citizen products are commonplace, the UK has little independent choice or market in such citizen services.

To take another example, the community initiative MyPolice³⁹ (an online service that fosters constructive, collaborative communication between people and the police forces which serve them) was recently challenged by an official initiative from Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabularies (HMIC) called, MyPolice⁴⁰, aiming to do much the same thing. In the event, HMIC modified their plans. But the incident suggests that these wider cultural issues remain a problem across the public sector and could impede the effective delivery of open and participative government.

Public services need to be multi-channel – delivered not just through traditional channels, but also through diverse intermediaries and devices so that citizens can choose what works best for them. And they should be delivered at the appropriate level – locally not centrally. The UK already has existing policy around the use of multi-channels and intermediaries – but it needs to be revisited, updated and implemented.

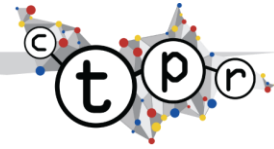
The reach and effectiveness of public services is enhanced by the Internet. It can help make public services and the interaction points with them ubiquitous. Even those who do not use the Internet themselves can take advantage of the improvements that the Internet brings, since the same underlying infrastructure can be utilised by both public service employees and third party intermediaries.

COLLABORATION

The better use of information assets will enable more agile, more responsive and higher quality decision-making – by providing feedback mechanisms to improve services. There is also a need to recognise different types of collaboration: *ad-hoc collaboration* – where the public sector generally performs poorly – and *routine collaboration*, where it tends to be stronger.

³⁹ <http://www.mypolice.org/>

⁴⁰ <http://www.mypolice.org.uk/>



Given the complexity of government in the UK, with central government, local government, regional government, quangos, non-departmental public bodies, charities and commercial organisations all involved in delivery of key public services, management of data has often become a major hindrance. The publishing of public data in open, machine readable formats will help to transform collaboration across these boundaries.

But this is not just about the use of collaborative tools within the public sector. It is also about collaboration with citizens and businesses. At present, the civil service is impeded by the existing blocks on access to and use of social networking sites and other modern technologies. It is cut off from many of the very people it is there to assist. During the recent controversial Digital Economy Bill debate, for example, many critics were using Facebook, Twitter and other social media to provide informed comment on areas they believed needed better scrutiny. Without access to such channels, and some of the intelligent and important feedback being provided through them, those framing the Bill were unable to review and consider changes that could have improved the subsequent legislation.

Technology has the potential to improve co-ordination between those making policy and the frontline public service workers (whether public employees or third parties) who actually deliver the services on a daily basis. It can improve feedback and insight, enabling the realities of practical experience, combined with frontline insight, to provide improved public services. Flexible, agile technology that both improves the feedback mechanism between policy and practice will help inform the design, development and delivery of more efficient and relevant services.

The lack of a focus on outcomes, combined with absent feedback mechanisms, in part explains why the aspirations of the past 13 years have failed to be delivered: policy is announced without a clear governance structure to ensure its delivery. Neither are lessons learned from where things have gone wrong. Effective feedback mechanisms from the frontline – from public employees and citizens and businesses – are an essential missing tool in enabling policy to be better connected to the reality of what is happening – and needed – on the ground. Even those departments who have a direct interaction with citizens and businesses do not have a consistent, effective feedback loop.



MPs and their weekly surgeries help provide part of the existing feedback loop on the reality of public services for many UK citizens. The scale of genuinely open government foreseen in this paper does raise some challenging questions: after all, if MPs can't currently fix the problems being raised with them by their constituents, how will digital channels be any different? They are certainly likely to produce a much higher volume of feedback, as well as raising complex issues about how to arbitrate the quality and relevance of the issues raised.

Increased public participation in policy development can typically produce tens of thousands of responses. So the problems here include:

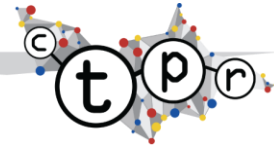
- the **technical** (are you going to do some data mining?)
- the **organisational** (are you going to introduce active moderation and who is going to do that?)
- the **legal** (what is the position of consultations in the legislative life cycle and how are you going to define the results?)

These problems are not impossible to address. Private sector companies are already using consumer feedback to help improve their products and services. Such feedback is commonplace in the software marketplace, with large companies such as Apple and Microsoft utilising continual feedback on their products to help improve their next iteration of goods and services. Other companies such as Unilever⁴¹ are also reported to have used consumer feedback from social networking sites to produce new products based on consumer innovation and demand.

The public sector needs space to innovate if it is truly going to take a benefit from open government and the associated redesign of our public services. It also needs space to make mistakes – but it needs to learn from those mistakes, to be able to articulate clearly what would be done better next time and to “fail forward”. Modern technology offers enormous potential for innovation but, by definition, not all innovations will succeed.

In order to encourage innovative use with open data, government departments must be expected to allow a percentage of their operational budget to be spent on innovative application development, to be completed within a clear timeframe (such as 60 working

⁴¹ <http://www.marketingmagazine.co.uk/news/rss/987312/Unilever-launches-Marmite-X0-following-social-media-campaign/>



days), some of which, inevitably, will fail. If potentially ground-breaking innovations are ever to be successfully encouraged and developed, the political debate must move beyond tabloid headlines focused on short-term questions such as “*How much taxpayers’ money has been wasted on ...?*” and instead look at how successfully, overall, **public services** (not just their IT elements) have been improved. In return for this political agreement, all projects that “fail” must “fail forward” by providing a one page summary of what was learned from the unsuccessful innovation attempt.

If such innovation budgets are not made available and made successful, government should start publishing, openly, the amount of staff time (properly costed, including the opportunity costs) spent at internal meetings which provide no clearly identifiable improved *outcomes* in public services. The waste inherent in the *status quo* is currently hidden and needs to be exposed to public scrutiny. Internally-focused costs such as these, which do not produce any improvement in outcomes, are in fact a less acceptable use of taxpayer’s money than trying to innovate improvements in our public services.

In the public sector, a growing number of sites already demonstrate the potential for improved participation – including for example, [the Rewired State](#)⁴², [UKGovWeb](#)⁴³, [data.gov.uk](#), [WriteToThem](#)⁴⁴, [TheyWorkForYou](#)⁴⁵, [Talk About Local](#)⁴⁶, and [Total Place](#)⁴⁷.

These models need to be encouraged: they are powerful examples of the potential for open government to improve collaboration and will eventually play a key role in the redesign of the UK’s public services. Government needs to become a benevolent, enabling partner in such initiatives, not revert to its more traditional top down command and control mindset.

⁴² <http://rewiredstate.org>

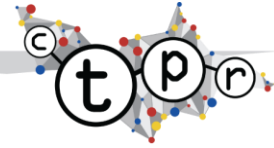
⁴³ <http://www.ukgovweb.org/>

⁴⁴ <http://www.writetothem.com/>

⁴⁵ <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/>

⁴⁶ <http://talkaboutlocal.org.uk/>

⁴⁷ <http://www.localleadership.gov.uk/totalplace/>



SOME NEXT STEPS FOR THE UK

This section builds on the preceding discussion. It develops a set of specific recommendations to help progress open government in the UK.

MAKING IT HAPPEN: LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE

Some of the potential blockers to achieving open government include:

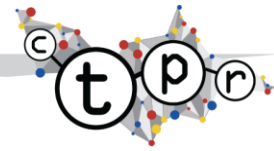
- the poor quality of some existing data – and the associated fear of exposing it to wider public scrutiny
- the periodic re-baselining of data, which can make understanding and using data sets complex for those who are not specialists in a particular subject
- the lack of a clear point of ownership of the overall open government programme
- the pushback from civil servants that “*It costs too much / distracts us from delivering public services*”
- the pushback from politicians, concerned that it will take away the ability to “spin” public information for party political or personal purposes
- the reality that public data cannot always necessarily be effectively anonymised, with the potential for aggregated data to lead to invasions of personal privacy
- recognition that real-time data flows will challenge traditional approaches and planning assumptions (including the idea of a 10 yearly census)

Open government is ultimately not about technology, but about politics. We may not, after all, want the state to build systems that infringe our rights or share our personal data, even if that might make the state more cost-effective and more efficient from its own perspective. We need to find a way of balancing technical solutions with the necessary liberties that people expect from our UK democracy.

LEADERSHIP

The US model under President Obama has shown how strong leadership together with a clear action plan can enable rapid progress in taking open government forward. The UK needs to adopt a similar model, with ownership and vision at the highest level and a set of roles, actions and accountabilities that will ensure the existing moves towards open government are sustained by top-level ownership and momentum.

- **Recommendation:** *issue a Prime Ministerial edict on open government to set out clear political leadership and vision that learns from the “Obama memo”. A strong direction and political will is needed to drive through the cultural changes necessary to make open government stick. The memo should set out a clear set of guiding principles for all to follow and make clear who will have responsibility and accountability for its delivery.*



At local government level, this approach should be echoed with responsibility and accountability at the Chief Executive level, rather than seeing the issue merely as one of technology for the CIO to manage.

At present, the open government programme is often taken solely to mean **open data**. But it is far wider than this. It is not about data alone, or even technology alone. It is about a fundamental change in the relationship between government and citizen. Political leadership needs to make this clear and well understood.

Openness should be applied to processes not just technology. Many of the public sector's overly complex business processes are the cause of inefficiency, and have a knock-on effect in terms of how well IT can assist the operation and admin of public services. They need to be opened up to public access and feedback as much as public data. The existing data.gov.uk is a subset of what is needed to be truly open – a wider “open government” site is needed.

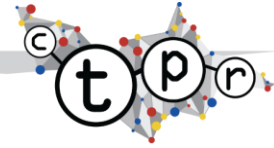
The UK made some good early progress in the late 1990's and early 2000's. These included both a top level vision set out by the Prime Minister, the passing of the **Freedom of Information Act in 2000** and a series of policies that would enable its wider effective delivery (such as a **trust model**, an **intermediary policy** and an **interoperability framework**). These documents are still openly published on the Cabinet Office Website and appear to remain government policy⁴⁸. But they are not being maintained nor are they enforced. They should be revisited, updated and implemented as a key mechanism for driving momentum behind the open government agenda.

- **Recommendation:** *enforce existing policies. The existing intermediary strategy, trust and other policies are currently being ignored. They need to be updated, revitalised and enforced, with clarity of responsibility and accountability for their delivery.*

WHITEHALL CULTURE

Whilst there is clearly some encouraging enthusiasm across Whitehall for the data.gov.uk initiative, removing the wider culture of information being “**closed by default**” in the civil service will take time and strong political will. Localism and the devolution of power away from the centre, combined with the same rigorous commitment to “*open by default*” at the local level, have key roles to play in letting

⁴⁸ <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/govtalk/policydocuments.aspx>



sunlight into the process of government. Technology and universal access will encourage and accelerate the change of culture.

Two of the most common arguments that have been put forward by senior civil servants less favourable towards open government during the compilation of this paper can be characterised as:

- *“Providing this data will cost a fortune – and take attention away from delivering public services”*
- *“Our data is inaccurate. You can’t expose it”*

Whilst both of these arguments have an element of truth in them, they effectively propagate a negative circle of poor quality data informing the running of public services. It is reminiscent of the old story of a woodsman who is busy sawing through wood with a rusty, blunt saw: it is very hard work with such a poor tool, but the woodsman is simply too busy to stop to sharpen the saw. The result is that he remains perpetually inefficient and overworked.

To help rebuild trust, the public sector should be subject to the same regulatory regime as the private sector. This will bring greater consistency and improved accountability, and should be seen as a key element in the move towards genuinely pervasive open government.

- **Recommendation:** *Impose the same governance regime on Whitehall as exists for private companies. The same governance regime should be applied to both private and public sectors. The public sector should be obliged to meet the same standards as private companies: eg. to provide signed-off annual accounts, to keep all transactions on the books (unlike PFI), to detail who sits on the board and their remuneration packages, to show the return on investment of IT expenditure, etc. This level of consistency around openness will help re-establish trust and entrench better cultural values.*

Whitehall has become focused on monitoring process and metrics rather than on whether desired policy outcomes are being achieved. There needs to be a move away from trying to micro-manage *how* the wider public sector implements policy, and a focus instead on whether the *outcomes* are delivered.

- **Recommendation:** *audit outcomes not process or inputs. Audits must focus on whether the intended policy outcomes for public services are being achieved, not whether arbitrary processes are being followed. Hold people and organisations responsible for outcomes, but let them innovate and find their own ways of achieving those outcomes.*



The release of public data needs to be a routine by-product of everyday processes, not a burdensome overhead. And releasing data for widespread public and media scrutiny will prove an effective way of helping cleanse and improve it. This is also not just about data alone: but about the interfaces and processes that enable public services to be delivered successfully through a wide range of channels and intermediaries.

- **Recommendation:** *Update and mandate the existing public sector intermediary policy, to empower locally delivered services through citizens' choice of channel. Ensure all Permanent Secretaries and their leadership team and staff are aware of their obligations*

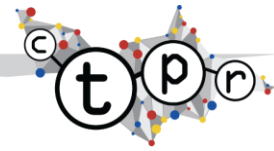
Whitehall is often accused of being remote and out of touch. This need not be the case. Modern technologies enable real-time feedback and a much more agile and time-sensitive awareness of how services are operating for those who deliver or rely on them.

- **Recommendation:** *listen to and act on the needs of the frontline. Policy and business planning must demonstrate that it collects and acts on feedback from citizens, frontline employees, local authorities and related third party organisations. The focus should move to services delivered locally through citizens' channel of choice, not on centrally imposed ideas about what may or may not work*

The public sector is often slow to understand, accept and take advantage of modern technologies – despite the fact that they can provide more effective and efficient ways of working. At present, many government organisations have chosen to block access to new Internet services, preventing civil servants from connecting and communicating with the users of public services. Nobody would regard it as sensible to block access to Royal Mail, the telephone or email. Yet government organisations frequently block access to new technologies.

As one civil servant described it during the preparation of this report, current government policy prevents civil servants accessing the very tools and forums where citizens are providing feedback and comment on public services. Social media such as [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) are often blocked in public sector organisations in the same way at one time they also blocked access to email and Web sites. This isolation from the technology that people increasingly use to collaborate and communicate places the public sector and its employees at a disadvantage. Government needs to adhere to its own multi-channel policies.

These restrictive policies are effectively isolating civil servants from some of the citizens and businesses they are there to serve. As a result, they remain blind to a great deal of



the modern discourse around better policymaking and better public services. New technological tools need to be integrated into routine work processes rather than being separate from them.

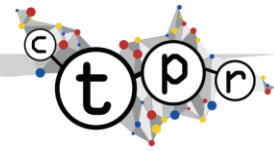
- **Recommendation:** *open up access to social media and networking tools for civil servants. This is where many citizens and businesses now live and communicate and participate. Without access to these important new tools, central government is running blind from those it is there to serve.*

Misuse of social media is not a technology access issue. It is a personnel and internal employee policy issue, in the same way misuse of the telephone or Royal Mail or expenses would be. It should be dealt with appropriately, not used as a pretext to block access to important technologies that can enable civil servants to work more effectively.

The commercial and voluntary sector has been very effective at using new social media to communicate and assist people. From sites such as [Mumsnet](#)⁴⁹, which shares self-help ideas and experiences between parents, to technical forums where users help themselves and access advice provided by experienced professionals, these sites have become powerful self-learning and self-help services. Many companies actively encourage and reward their employees for participating in these communities, recognising the benefits they bring in good will, reduced support calls and in providing insight into how to improve their products and services. The public sector needs to systematically adopt a similar model, enabling civil servants with subject matter expertise – from local traffic planning issues through to complex issues relating to taxation and welfare – to participate in communities of interest on social networking sites and community forums.

The civil service reward model should help encourage civil servants to participate in appropriate forums, over time helping build up an invaluable self-help resource for many millions of online citizens and businesses. There will be other related benefits, such as a reduction over time in the number of citizens who will need to phone a call centre as they will be able to find relevant, accurate self-service information online instead. Policy and service owners will be able to use the issues raised in such forums to identify persistent problems and poor experiences and help revise processes to improve the quality and relevance of public services.

⁴⁹ <http://www.mumsnet.com/>



- **Recommendation:** *adopt the approach taken in the private sector to informed self-help. Empower knowledgeable civil servants to be active in community forums (such as those relating to tax and benefits) and help resolve issues that citizens and businesses face – longer term this will also help build up a self-help repository. Look at and learn from online community forum models.*

As well as such participatory social networking sites and services, other forms of electronic channel exist which are rarely used in the public sector, but which are increasingly common in the commercial sector. These include “live chat” facilities, which enable consumers to connect in real time with companies such as BT and HP in order to work through support issues and related questions. The same approach should be used in the public sector to ensure a focus on improving services through the routine use of the capabilities offered by new technology. Live chat, for example, enables online, in-context support for citizens rather than requiring them to move to another entirely different communication channel, such as phoning a call centre. Government should talk with companies using this approach to understand the costs and benefits involved and then seek to deploy them for online government services.

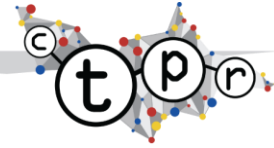
- **Recommendation:** *employ real-time communications for online government services. Offer a “live chat” facility for online users as part of the move to multi-channel delivery of public services and to avoid the next stage always being referral to a call centre. Learn from commercial models such as that used by BT.*

The annual public sector spend on traditional forms of advertising – print, radio, TV, etc – is significant⁵⁰. Government should consider whether some (or all) of this budget might produce better *outcomes* by redirecting it into more rapid provisioning of public information and processes, together with the tools for citizens and businesses to make use of them.

- **Recommendation:** *switch from marketing and PR to openness. Consider redirecting those public funds currently spent on marketing and PR into the provisioning of data and the tools to analyse them and their associated business processes.*

Some of the marketing budget might also be suitable to use for making up “trading fund” shortfalls in the move to open public data. The income derived from trading funds is often cited as the reason why some public data cannot be opened up free of charge. Yet a tiny fraction of government’s annual spend on PR and marketing would easily cover the difference.

⁵⁰ As much as £540m per annum according to *Marketing Week* (<http://www.marketingweek.co.uk/coi-spend-leaps-by-almost-50-to-%C2%A3540m/3002588.article>, Mon, 20 Jul 2009)



There is clear enthusiasm among parts of the public sector for the open government agenda. This needs to be actively encouraged and nurtured in order to help build momentum behind the new change of culture. This should be done in the context of reducing the current obsessive metrics around performance indicators to a more effective model of monitoring public service outcomes. It is often remarked that “rewards drives behaviours” so it is important for the civil service to ensure it has appropriate incentive and recognition models in place to support those helping drive change.

- **Recommendation:** *Introduce a new civil service risk/reward model. The change in culture in the civil service required for truly open government to happen should be encouraged through appropriate incentives in the way that they are recognised and rewarded. Reward innovation and successful risk management, not risk avoidance.*

Previous initiatives, such as the e-government programme of the early 2000’s, eventually lost both political willpower and practical momentum. It is important to learn from this experience and ensure more systematic momentum so that open government becomes the embedded culture, rather than being seen as an interim fashion which will eventually wane. Simple, practical steps such as a public dashboard, along the lines of that made available in the US, ensures that visibility is maintained of progress against outcomes, together with clarity about who is accountable and responsible if that progress is not being sustained.

- **Recommendation:** *establish and maintain a public open government dashboard to show a clear, prioritised list of what will be made available and when, who is responsible/accountable and progress against delivery using a traffic light system (red, amber, green)*

It is also important that there are clear owners of the open government agenda. As we have said, this is not about technology. It is about a fundamental transition in the way that government thinks and operates. It therefore needs to be owned at the highest levels of the civil service within each government department and agency.

- **Recommendation:** *make Permanent Secretaries accountable and responsible for meeting the agreed outcomes for their respective departments. Without accountability and responsibility, delivery does not happen*

Successful open government will depend upon a favourable regulatory environment. This does not necessarily entail the introduction of further regulation, but may lead to the *absence* of often contradictory legal regulation across different policy domains.



Where there is a need for regulation, neither should it necessarily require intervention at the level of primary legislation.

- **Recommendation:** *establish regulatory co-ordination points across the various departments and agencies of government to ensure consistency in the rules that facilitate open government policies*

MAKING IT HAPPEN: TECHNOLOGY POLICY

OPEN GOVERNANCE

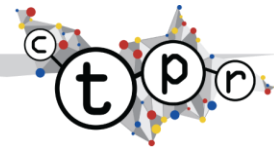
Technology has become a strategic asset that needs to be embedded in the senior civil service. It is often forgotten that government IT is not a fixed thing, but a process that continually evolves. It is not a brittle set of products – or, at least, it should not be. IT needs to be better understood and better managed, to be broken down into its many forms, with a clear distinction between, for example, mass transactional services (such as tax collection and welfare payments) and the use of participative, interactive technologies such as wikis. Whilst commodity IT services might well be outsourced into a more effective, open market, the bespoke and pioneering uses of IT in the public sector require more intelligent in-house ownership and a suitable risk/reward model to encourage innovation. Innovation needs to be done and developed in-house until it reaches the level of routine maturity where it can be outsourced as a commodity. And such outsourcing needs to be about marketisation, not monopolisation.

The recently published [Government ICT Strategy](#)⁵¹ sets out a “future vision” for 2020 that describes what already exists outside of the public sector. The public sector needs to catch up. To do so, it will need to make changes to its governance structure and the strategic role of technology in the design of our public services.

This will involve recruiting and appointing senior figures who understand both the potential of technology in the transformation of public services and how it can best be delivered. This new, true Chief Information Officer (CIO) role should sit on departmental boards to bring the business value and public service capabilities of technology directly into the policy-making process.

- **Recommendation:** *create a new departmental Board-level, business-led CIO function able to advise on technology’s role in the re-design of the UK’s public services.*

⁵¹ <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/cio/ict.aspx>



Technology is not utilised as a strategic asset at senior management levels in Whitehall. This needs to be addressed. Enhanced skills in technology will initially provide a practical benefit, but over time will also help progress a major change in the culture and efficiency of Whitehall.

- **Recommendation:** *introduce compulsory training in technology policy and technology for all senior civil servants.*
- **Recommendation:** *introduce open data / information management crash courses for civil servants of all levels*

The Internet age has also challenged old-fashioned approaches to centralised governance and monolithic architectural and procurement processes. Modern approaches to technology are responsive and agile and enable effective delivery with active user participation in their design and use. There is also a close engagement and alignment between the move towards more flexible, user-responsive technology and public policy, which is increasingly focused on the “**new localism**”. However, public sector IT is still on its twentieth century trajectory and misaligned with the direction of travel of both policy and technology. IT must be integrated as part of the overall business strategy.

- **Recommendation:** *integrate technology in public sector planning documents, don't publish separate, isolated documents that talk about IT as if it is justified in its own right.*

OPEN ARCHITECTURE

Traditionally the public sector has assumed all information assets need to be specified, purchased and operated by the public sector itself, but new approaches challenge this assumption. Modern architectures are modular and agile, built to change.

A well-designed architecture is an essential bedrock for an open government programme. Architecture is also not just about a *technical* architecture. It provides an **all-up** design that covers functions, processes, people, organisational structures, organisational information and computer systems (hardware, software and communications technologies), mapping their relationships to public service outcomes.

- **Recommendation:** *design a business architecture for UK public services, one designed for the twenty-first century that provides a clear basis on which open government can be delivered.*

This is not just about open public data being made available for external consumption. The architecture also needs to enable citizens and businesses to control the flow of their



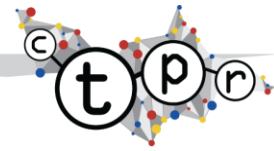
personal and business information into government. The idea of **volunteered personal information** (VPI) enables citizens to choose where to store their personal data and to enable third parties, such as government, to access it when required. This is similar in principle to the model used by the banks, who do not hold all personal detail themselves but use third parties, such as the credit reference agencies, when they need access to additional information. However, the credit reference agency model works without the empowerment and permission of the consumer. The VPI model places the data under direct citizen control. It needs to be an intrinsic part of the overall open government design.

PROCUREMENT

The old era approach, of large single-supplier, monolithic procurements is still prevalent. Witness for example the recent IBM/Essex Council deal, an 8 year, £5.4bn contract; or the recent renewal of HMRC's *Aspire* contact. Public sector procurement was originally designed to provide long-term systems, built for a single purpose. But modern technology needs to be about agile systems built for change, capable of supporting evolving public policy on the fly. There seems to be a collision at the moment between the nature of some of the new democratising technologies and tools, and the existing monolithic procurement processes – built around failed models of demand aggregation and constrained markets. This is not so much a critique of individual contracts in isolation, but of the *overall* approach to procurement in the UK, which is where the root of the failure lies.

Procurement practice needs to distinguish between mainstream commodity procurement and complex bespoke procurement. It also needs to enable smaller vendors to become part of public sector procurement. This needs to be reflected in an updated, more agile approach to procurement in the public sector. And all aspects of that process need to be openly published, including details of all costs and contracts.

- **Recommendation:** *open up the procurement process. Openly publish details of all contracts, contractors and costs by default.*
- **Recommendation:** *implement competitive bid reviews for procurements and clearly identify and explain all sole-source procurement decisions on the relevant website*
- **Recommendation:** *implement procurement mandates. mandate open data and APIs as a fundamental requirement of all procurements (new and in process)*
- **Recommendation:** *use the Internet for commodity services not proprietary/bespoke in-house alternatives. Use free assets (such as Facebook, WordPress, Office Live etc) DON'T specify and procure bespoke versions for citizen interactions.*



- **Recommendation:** link procurement contracts and other public sector funding initiatives to open licences. Include specific provisions linking the award of contract to the use of open licensing unless there is a compelling and specific reason for keeping all rights reserved.

MODERNISATION AND SIMPLIFICATION – REDESIGN OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Open government requires the redesign of our public services based on what is now possible: not the use of technology to automate manual or broken processes. This will involve an iterative cycle with policy makers and the users of public services to simplify policy and its associated business process design, and hence the IT needed to deliver/support it.

- **Recommendation:** include designers in public sector projects and programmes, to help design the end-to-end process as existing, inefficient approaches are replaced
- **Recommendation:** fund and develop the role of ground-up “redesigned State” design-focused events modelled on the successful “rewired State” approach. Consider hybrid events that bring geeks and designers together in new and unexpected ways.

PUBLIC DATA

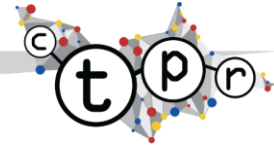
Opening up public data not just in traditional terms, but in machine readable format so that it can be used onwardly in computer-based processes, is a keystone of open government. The UK has made good progress recently with the launch of the data.gov.uk site, which aims to provide a standard place for public data to be published in open formats.

For existing UK systems, making such data available involves releasing them via the data.gov.uk site. However for new systems developments and procurements, the requirements of open data must be built into those systems as one of their core design principles. Over time, public data will automatically be made available by such systems and will eventually be able to move from periodic updates to data on a relatively static Website to near real-time availability of such data. However, making this happen is not just a question of the smart use of technology: it will also require a strong political will and direction to ensure the culture of “open by default” becomes an embedded cultural reality.

- **Recommendation:** require the default open publication of data, interfaces and processes in all current and future procurements

PRIVATE DATA

Private, or personal, citizen data plays a key role in the effective delivery of the UK’s public services. Yet as well as being a key asset it is also a liability, as well-reported



stories of both public and private sector data losses make clear⁵². Collecting and storing large volumes of personal data in the public sector not only carries risk, but also significant costs and challenges – including ensuring that information is kept updated to ensure it is relevant and accurate. Since government and public services are also compartmentalised, the same data is collected in multiple places, increasing the risk of accidental or malicious disclosure and compounding the problems of ensuring it is accurate and well-maintained.

Government should take advantage of better approaches, collecting and keeping as little personal data as possible: the bare minimum needed to deliver public services. Significantly less personal data is often required than is generally assumed. This is not a technical issue. It's about a culture that has often forgotten that personal data is the citizen's private information, not the government's.

New models of **volunteered personal information** can provide citizens with the choice of where to store their personal data. Government does not need to hold and maintain all personal data itself – enabling itself to reduce risk, lower costs and improve both public services and trust. As well as benefitting from a model where citizens take personal responsibility for updating their own records.

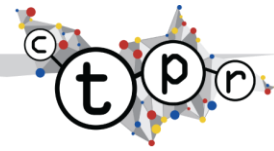
- **Recommendation:** *deliver two volunteered personal information prototypes (cross-organisational in nature) to establish a new culture and technical approach to the handling of personal data*

PRIVACY AND SECURITY

The idea of **open government** and ensuring adequate privacy and security of both personal and sensitive information may seem like uneasy partners. But they need not be. Appropriate levels of privacy and security, together with new models of where and how information and technology is used, can be supported by better designed privacy and security measures.

Whilst public data is increasingly seen as a public good, with automatic rights of access, personal data is subject to very different rules and processes. The new approach, of volunteered personal information, combined with other privacy-enhancing technologies, such as those of minimal disclosure, offer the opportunity for government

⁵² <http://www.computerweekly.com/Articles/2008/10/29/232970/ico-data-breaches-count-soars-to-277-with-most-in-public-sector-despite-hmrc.htm>



to put into place a more appropriate and more privacy-aware design better suited to the needs of twenty-first century public services.

- **Recommendation:** *mandate the principle of privacy by design in the same way that security engineering is already embedded throughout the lifecycle of public sector projects.*
- **Recommendation:** *review, modernise and streamline the existing security regime, removing any protective markings by default wherever possible. This will enable the use of open tools where currently they are prevented by over-zealous markings of documents and information that is not in fact restricted or confidential. Implement more effective security and privacy controls on those limited number of areas where protective marking and handling of information is a necessity.*

It is generally assumed that anonymous, public data and information can openly be published without any implications for the privacy of individuals. However, this is not the case: there are ways of aggregating public data sets and inferring information about specific groups or even individuals. The release of public data needs to be aware of these risks and how best to mitigate them. Concepts such as differential privacy are key to this understanding (see for example the work by Dwork⁵³).

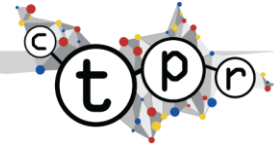
- **Recommendation:** *undertake ongoing risk analyses of aggregated public data sets and their potential impact on privacy. An expert panel should be established to review and develop mandatory privacy enhancing techniques and technologies to minimise the risks to privacy from the publication of open data.*
- **Recommendation:** *implement a Privacy Commons to ensure consistency of privacy standards across the public sector, and between sectors.*

To help both central and local government make these changes, better central guidance is required on security and privacy in the design of twenty-first century public services. Current guidance is generally regarded as inadequate and ambiguous, with the result that new commodity technologies such as cloud computing and software as a service are not being well-adopted.

OPEN STANDARDS

The UK was an early adopter of W3C and Internet standards for its e-Government Interoperability Framework (eGIF). As early as 1999 and 2000, it was already using XML as the *lingua franca* for government data. Its Government Gateway project, launched in 2002, used a variety of open APIs and open XML data formats to enable interoperability both inside of government and with commercial sector organisations.

⁵³ <http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/projects/databaseprivacy/dwork.pdf>



Government should not itself necessarily set or direct the standards process, but it should oversee the mandation of open standards in the public sector (notably those of the Internet and W3C). And it should build on the 80/20 principle, not aim for 100% perfection of complex and ever-moving requirements. The Internet model is about iterative delivery – build something, based on open standards, that provides basic functionality and then progressively enhance and innovate upon it. There must be a public sector-wide requirement that all systems and procurement must comply with open standards, or otherwise be rejected as unfit for purpose.

The UK's previous approach, sidelined by the *Transformational Government* agenda, remains an innovative and future-looking solution, but many of the related policies and documents have not been maintained and updated. The result is that few systems procured or developed in the interim have been designed with the required open interfaces and data formats. Government should return to its original strategic principles and revitalise this essential area.

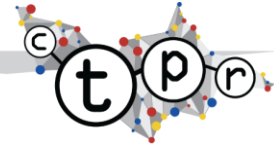
- **Recommendation:** *update existing policy documents relating to open standards and interoperability⁵⁴. This should be done as a continuing, collaborative, participatory exercise between government and the private and voluntary sectors.*

As the single government portal, direct.gov.uk, becomes more dominant, it needs to ensure it is fully open and accessible to third parties rather than becoming a monopoly service. It should ensure adherence with the multi-channel, interoperability and intermediary strategies.

- **Recommendation:** *mandate direct.gov.uk to provide open data and open API services to enable third parties to pull government data and transactional services in a consistent and reliable way and to compete with direct.gov.uk itself (it should not be a monopoly/monolithic provider)*

Another key piece of infrastructure is the **Government Gateway**, which provides a single point of authentication and transaction handling for all online government services. This system needs to maintain open data formats and open systems interfaces. As with direct.gov.uk, which should not have a monopoly on the online provision of public services, neither should the **Government Gateway** have a monopoly on identifiers.

⁵⁴ See <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/govtalk/policydocuments.aspx>



- **Recommendation:** *mandate the Government Gateway to support third party identifiers and the use of multiple identifiers, whilst providing single sign-on to public services. The Government Gateway was always designed to support third party identifiers. This work needs to be revitalised, with a range of third party identity issuers actively encouraged to ensure they work with online public services, providing choice for citizens and businesses alike, and open interoperability at the technical level.*

OPEN SOURCE

The UK's open source policy has endeavoured to ensure a level playing field for open source in the public sector alongside proprietary and other software licensing models. Ultimately the government seeks to ensure that best value over the lifetime of a project is its guiding principle.

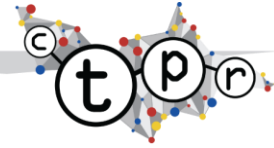
In the USA, [Open Source for America](#) has actively promoted the role of open source software as a key component of open government⁵⁵. The key recommendations that we believe should be adopted in the UK are as follows:

- **Recommendation:** *implement a system to receive unsolicited suggestions for free and open source software tools and software that can help them accomplish their missions*
- **Recommendation:** *encourage civil servants and public sector contractors to participate in open source software development initiatives where such efforts contribute to the government mission*
- **Recommendation:** *implement policy guidance promoting the identification and removal of any improper barriers to the effective development and use of open source software*
- **Recommendation:** *mandate the routine, open sharing of taxpayer-funded software source code and associated design documents across government and with the public*
- **Recommendation:** *open source government's operational models, rules engines and other related processes to provide open public scrutiny, feedback and improvement*
- **Recommendation:** *use and accept open file format standards for all external communications*

OPEN LICENSING

There remain a variety of restrictions on the use of public data, notably in areas such as the postcode database and geospatial information. Public data needs to become available free of charge using open licensing. Keeping it closed or chargeable inhibits innovation and fails to recognise the sovereignty of the citizen over information and data for which they have already paid.

⁵⁵ <http://opensourceforamerica.org/guidelines>



The UK has made some good progress, but these key areas remain that require reform. For example on the OPSI site, where public data licenses can be obtained, there are a whole series of exceptions identified:

“The exceptions to this are information and data produced by those government departments, agencies and trading funds that license Crown copyright information they originate under a delegation of authority granted by the Controller of HMSO. See the [Information Fair Trader Scheme \(IFTS\) Members page](#) for details of these organisations.”

These restrictions undermine the move towards open government. They need to be replaced by an open approach to licensing that encourages innovation.

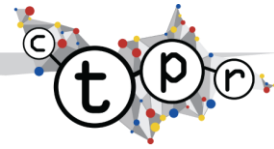
- **Recommendation:** *mandate open licensing as the default government licence. The existing OPSI review of licensing must be expedited and a timescale committed to where UK uses of information, processes and related tasks become freely available within a harmonised licensing framework.*

Where trading fund income is the blocker to making public information open, as we have mentioned earlier in this paper, government should consider redirecting some of its marketing and PR spend to address the trading fund shortfall in order to make such information freely available.

OPEN.GOV.UK

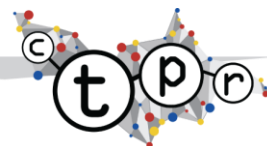
Government should establish a single site for all open government related materials, of which the technical [data.gov.uk](#) should be a key subsite. This will enable all related materials and progress to be readily accessed and understood by a wide range of citizens and businesses and not just the technical community. This is about open government in the round – of which open data access is but one aspect.

- **Recommendation:** *establish a single “open government” site (open.gov.uk?), to provide a single entry point to all open government initiative resources and sub-sites (such as data.gov.uk)*
- **Recommendation:** *implement an open government repository on the “open government” site, under each sub-section of transparency, participation, collaboration with all associated resources, links, blogs, feedback mechanisms*



FURTHER READING

- Digital Era Governance (Patrick Dunleavy, Helen Margetts, Simon Bastow, Jane Tinkler). Oxford, 2008.
- Dutch e-Citizen Charter <http://www.burgerlink.nl/englishsite/e-citizen-charter/e-citizen-charter.xml> (at http://www.burger.overheid.nl/files/burgerservicecode_uk.pdf as of 05.03.2010)
- <http://opengovernmentdata.org/>
- <http://opensourceforamerica.org/guidelines>
- Open Government: Collaboration, Transparency and Participation in Practice (Edited by Daniel Lathrop, Laurel Ruma). O'Reilly, 2010.
- "Government Data and the Invisible Hand," David G. Robinson, Harlan Yu, William Zeller, and Edward W. Felten, Yale Journal of Law & Technology, Vol. 11, 2009 (http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1138083)
- "The Right of Public Participation in the Law-Making Process and the Role of the Legislature in the Promotion of This Right," Karen Czapanskiy and Rashida Manjoo, University of Maryland School of Law Legal Studies, Vol. 42, 2008: 31
- Public Sector Information Directive (http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/policy/psi/index_en.htm)
- Extracting Value From Public Sector Information: Legal Framework and Regional Policies (EVPSI) Project (http://www.epsiplatform.eu/news/news/evpsi_public_launch)
- European Project LAPSI (Legal Aspects of Public Sector Information) (http://nexa.polito.it/LAPSIKickOffMeeting_eng)



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We have spoken with a wide variety of people and investigated numerous online and paper-based resources during the preparation of this paper. We should like to acknowledge them all – whilst recognising that many of them spoke to us on the basis of anonymity.

In particular we would like to express our gratitude to the guests who attended two Chatham House Rule round-table discussions on the topic of open government and helped develop some of the ideas explored in this paper. Their insights and feedback were invaluable – although the final paper may not necessarily reflect all of their views. This is a rich and diverse topic, and this paper is just one contribution towards more open government in the UK. We encourage you to visit our website to continue contributing to the dialogue on this important topic.

One particular group and set of individuals we would like to mention are the entire “*Idealgits*” group, who came together to develop a crowd-sourced Ideal Government IT Strategy (hence the abbreviated name). They will recognise some of the recommendations included in this paper as overlapping with that innovative work.

We should also like to highlight the valuable contributions from William Heath (of Ideal Government, Mydex and Control-Shift); Dr Edgar Whitley and Dr Pro Tsiavos (from the London School of Economics); and our designer Donagh, a freelance innovation architect and designer with an active interest in creative policy design processes (<http://donagh.net>).





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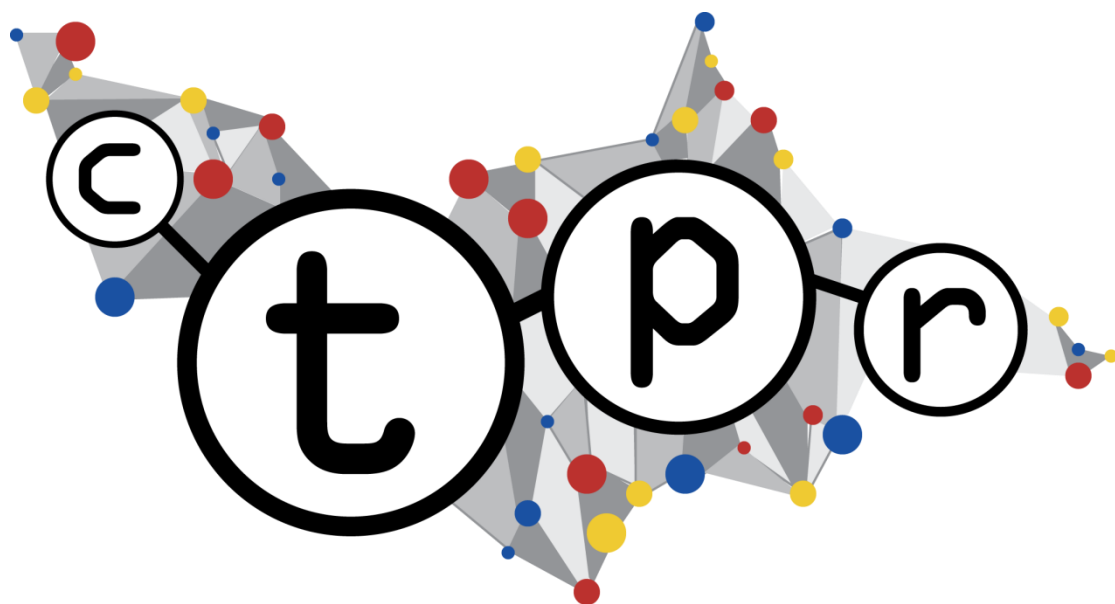
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