Open Government Data (The Book)

The principles, practices, and a history of the open government data movement.

Open government data has changed the way we understand civics. This book is about the principles behind that movement — yes, it is a movement — and its development in the United States. Topics include principles of open government data, the history of the movement, applications to transparency and civic engagement, a brief legal history, data quality, APIs, prioritization, civic hacking, case studies, and paradoxes in transparency.

I should note several limitations of this book. First, it is from a distinctly United States perspective both in terms of the history of the movement and in the expectations for government data given by the principles. Second, open government data is only a small part of the broader open government movement which encompasses classic open government (such as the Freedom of Information Act) as well as the newer fields of citizen participation and citizen experience. Finally, a disproportionate number of examples in this book are taken from projects related to transparency for the U.S. Congress. These limitations can all be explained by “write what you know.”

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