Congratulations IGF Workshop 120

Submitted on 28 Sep 2010 by

Congratulations to the IGF2010 forum and to Workshop 120 co-organised by Chris Corbin for the European Public Sector Information Platform and Antonio Saravia for Proyecto Aporta. For those who missed the live event it is available by webcast and transcript:
 http://www.intgovforum.org/cms

Workshop 120 was tweeted about as it progressed: 'Imagine if a Global #opendata panel met once a month rotating through EU countries – Workshop 120 #PSI_120. Such an event is not impossible and could provide remote participation. From 2006 to 2009 ePSIplus organised 26 physical country meetings plus additional thematic meetings.

I watched the webcast to see if any of the issues arose that had been commented on in the blog before the conference: open data initiatives and developing PSI portals, the role of the OECD and EU PSI Directive, and cloud computing and sustainability of the environment.

Despite the activities of the open data movement it was apparent that the question of how to challenge the desire of governments to restrict access to data and to enforce copyright remains a burning issue. There is also a concern that the economic climate makes this task harder. Participants in the workshop recognised the significance of focusing on cultural change so that the citizen expects that by default material will be made available for open access (using creative common licensing) in order to enable better informed decisions. However, the need to carry out economic studies to make the case for charging for data at marginal cost in order to stimulate economic growth, and the need for PSI holders and PSI re-users to understand each others' culture, was also discussed.

The policy of data.gov sites will be determined in the EU within the context of the PSI directive. But PSI custodians may also borrow from other broader principles, for example the OECD recommendations, to develop policy beyond that proposed by the Directive. This brings to focus the value of collaboration in developing principles on PSI. The OECD recommendations could also be useful for countries around the world that are not members of the OECD. Whilst these recommendations may have no legal force they provide a common focus and also carry authority.

The importance of environmental information and the value of opening up research and PSI to re-use, collaborative research and alternative interpretations in order to study climate change was also apparent. At the same time, workshop 106 was discussing the potential of cloud computing in tackling climate change and the value of universities, for example in Canada, co-operating to manage a shared 'green community' cloud.

Finally, as Chris Corbin, for ePSIplatform noted, a theme that also came out of the conference was the importance of opening up local data for local initiatives. An interesting aspect of the PSI debate is the quantity of data collected locally that could be made available locally and aggregated nationally. The opening up of local data is to be the theme of our next open ePSIplatform meeting on 29th November 2010 in Rennes. This meeting is being co-ordinated with our French partners. All are welcome to the meeting.

Report on workshop120