The Berlin Open Data League

Submitted on 30 Jul 2011 by wolfgang both

A starting point was the 2010 eGovernment Bar Camp (www.gov20camp.de) in Berlin. OD evangelists as Anke Domscheit-Berg, Daniel Dietrich, Julia Witt and Wolfgang Both were trying to initiate a common movement. To bundle the different OD activities in Berlin, we decided to establish an OD round-table. Next to the camp organiser, the Government2.0 Association, both the Open Data Network Germany and the Berlin City Administration ran OD projects. At that time a European project about open innovation was in preparation, too.

As a first step we started monthly meetings open for all those interested. Date and location of the round-table were announced via the websites www.opendataberlin.wordpress.com. Meanwhile we have our own mailing list.

During the first meetings the idea arose to organize a workshop for the Berlin administration, civil servants and politicians. The Munich Open Government Day (MOGDy) was a stimulus but not a blueprint for the Berlin Open Data Day (BODDy). The monthly round tables (in a pub) gave the chance for an informal discussion about our topic, to look back and forward and check the progress in the BODDy preparation. The tasks were shared among the core team around the table: location, keynote and speakers, catering, equipment, media and press information, sponsors, panel discussion, invitations, a.s.o.

At the same time we started with an official project in the frame of the Berlin eGovernment programme "ServiceStadt Berlin". The Council for Modernisation decided to fund a first OD project. All city departments were invited to support the study.

In a pre-study the Fraunhofer Institute FOKUS identified several distributed data bases, designed a "City Data Cloud" and made three main recommendations:

- Need for a political decision to develop an administrative-wide, strategic OD concept, leading to an OD guideline
- Analysis, specification and realization of an OD platform
- Starting with small pilot project based on available data sets

To identify the citizens' interest in OD we designed an online voting procedure. A list of 20 categories from "administration" to "waste" was given. The citizens could select three topics of their main interest. During four weeks we collected the responses from more than 1.300 voters. At the end the ranking list was headed by "City Development", "Environment" and "Inspections".

All these points were picked up in the draft for the Berlin OD project. The conceptual work has to describe the structural, the technical and the legal aspects of OD. It should give a first rough concept for an OD platform. And it has to consider the developments at the national as well as the European level.

To broaden our work base Berlin became partner in the European project on open innovation mechanism in smart cities (Open Cities – www.opencities.net) and together with Munich founded an OD working group in the Eurocities Network (www.eurocities.eu). While the OD WG has already more the 20 members across Europe there are five partners in the Open Cities project so far :Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Helsinki and Paris. The project is led by Barcelona, Berlin is responsible for the work package 4 on OD. Some of the cities have already opened their city data portal (Barcelona, Paris). During the 2011 ePSI conference in Berlin we reported first steps in these

projects.

The [Berlin Open Data Day](#) took place on May 18th, 2011. The resonance was overwhelming, more than 130 participants came to the workshop. It was opened by the major and Senator for Economics, Technology and Women´s issues, Mr. Harald Wolf. The Berlin CIO, Mr. Ulrich Freise, gave a key note, underlining the importance of OD and its impact on a new administration culture. The representatives from the networks and NGOs expressed their belief in OD and asked the politicians to support this change in administrative acting.

The second part showed us a series of OD example projects from "[Berlin open budget](#)" to "[free fruits](#)" to "[wheelmap](#)". A panel discussion was the third part. During the discussion the "[Berlin Open Data Agenda](#)" was presented. This is a paper of six points, worked out by the round-table, to describe the next steps in the OD activities.

The BODDy gave the OD movement a great push in Berlin and in Germany. At the end of the Day the great success of the OD league became evident: It is no longer an activity of enthusiasts on a narrow basis. It is clear now that the topic OD has reached the political level.

The next steps of the Berlin OD League will be the launching of a Berlin data portal and a session during the 2011 Open Government Bar Camp at the end of September. The "[Apps für Deutschland](#)" contest will be a good chance to contribute with data sets as well as with proposals for apps (see also this [article](#) in the press).

Wolfgang Both and Julia Witt for the Berlin Open Data Round-Table.