

# Go Knock On More Doors!

Submitted on 31 Mar 2012 by Ton Zijlstra

A few choice quotes have stuck with me from our [conference "Taking Re-use To The Next Level"](#) two weeks ago.

- That we need more experimentation, and dare to try
- That we need to speed things up
- That things don't just need to get better but get better faster
- That it is often better to ask for forgiveness afterwards, than for permission beforehand
- That this is not the time to sit still, but to get moving, also through collective action and community efforts.

Even though promising building blocks of an open data world are available, and promising examples of new value being created are visible, socially and economically, we are not there yet by a long shot. That's why more efforts are needed.

Because, although the [proposals to renew the PSI Directive by the European Commission](#) are ambitious (while not being as ambitious as could be), some of the responses seem to want to make the new PSI Directive even weaker than the current PSI Directive. That would be a step backwards, where multiple steps forwards are actually needed.

Because, although the business case for open data has been [thoroughly made](#), it is still the case that every single public sector body, and every single civil servant in Europe needs to individually be convinced to make progress towards open data, in absence of mandatory minimum efforts. And we haven't reached many of them yet, although I would blindly accept the challenge to explain for any public sector body how there would be a net benefit to themselves in opening up the data they hold.

Because, even though examples of innovation with open data are plenty, often the wrong type of questions are asked to estimate the level of it. "Where is the killer app for open data?" and "Where's the next Google?" are impossible to answer beforehand, only with the benefit of hindsight. The app market did not exist at all just five years ago (when the first iPhone was launched), let alone open data apps. The next Google is still working from its garage or skunk works, and will seem insignificant for a long time still to established players. What are currently widely regarded as early killer apps for the internet (e-mail) and mobile communications (sms) weren't even intended for end-users, but originally emerged as communication channels for system and network admin. Innovation theory predicts that what will end up creating the biggest impact will start out at the low end, will be crappier than what is already there, and will seem unthreatening to established players until it is too late. The biggest mistake to be made now is not extending or even shrinking this new field of opportunity called Open Data just as we are seeing the first seedlings take root, and from which much more innovation can grow.

In short we need to knock on many more doors. Especially on the doors where we don't expect immediate appreciation of the potential of open data. To reach those we haven't reached yet, and because it will take several years anyway until a new PSI Directive will become law.

We need to knock on the doors of those negotiating the new PSI Directive in our name, to say we want to see steps taken forward, and bold steps at that.

We need to knock on many more doors, using the arguments we've been using, and new ones based

on the new examples of value being created and costs being saved we find.

We need to knock on many more doors, using the stories and examples from across the EU: Why is a data set that is available in France not available in the Netherlands for instance, or vice versa? Every country has open data examples to help you show in your own country what you are asking for is not such a big step after all.

Find and share those stories and examples here at [ePSIplatform.eu](http://ePSIplatform.eu). Every member with an LINK account can blog on the site. [Share your anecdotes](#), actual real life open data experiences, with us in our survey as well. [As many stories as you can](#). From the patterns across those stories we will see opportunities to act and barriers to overcome. From the patterns we'll see which doors we still need to knock on.

So we can reach the next level of re-using open government data.

Let's go knock on more doors!



*Doors to knock on. Photo by [Dave Morris](#).*