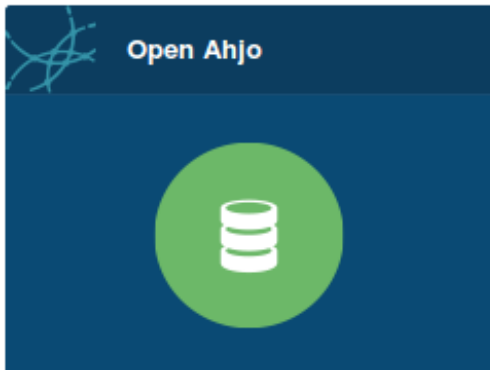# Helsinki - transparency pioneer in Finland

Submitted on 30 Sep 2013 by Jarkko Moilanen

The City of Helsinki has launched a Web service titled **Open Ahjo** in March 2013. The new service gives an opportunity for the citizens of the Finnish capital to go online to find out the agendas and decisions of Helsinki City leaders and elected officials. **Open Ahjo** gives access to City records and makes them available to the general public as open data through an open user interface.

Open Ahjo represents the latest stage of the City of Helsinki electronic decision-making system Ahjo used by the Helsinki City Council, City Board and other decision-making bodies. Open Ahjo lists about 25,000 City decisions in a year.

Mayor Pajunen pointed out, "*Openness has been our guiding principle even earlier. Secrecy is an exception. But reviewing City documents has been a laborious task. Everything has been there, but behind many doors*." Open Ahjo now makes the City electronic archives available on an unprecedented scale and facilitates the review process. Records are automatically copied into Open Ahjo, where they and their attachments are available in a machine-readable format for anyone in an unrestricted manner and free of charge.

The Open Ahjo interface is mainly intended for developers. Open Ahjo is ideal for developers and provides vast opportunities where only programming skills and the imagination set limits.

Helsinki loves developers

Open Ahjo is not the first or only isolated open data & government related activity in Helsinki. A developer portal named Helsinki Loves Developers largely focuses on Open Ahjo, providing application programming interfaces (APIs) for developers. The Helsinki Loves Developers project participates in app challenges such as Open Helsinki Hack-at-Home, which seeks out good ideas for Open Ahjo and helps the ideas' creators to build apps that advance transparency in the City decision making and facilitate citizen feedback to the City. More at dev.hel.fi.

Helsinki Region Infoshare open data portal

The City of Helsinki adopted an open data policy in May 2010. Helsinki Region Infoshare (HRI) was established later in the year to publish open data from public-sector sources through the project's online service at www.hri.fi, and the project was joined by the Helsinki Metropolitan Area cities of Espoo, Vantaa and Kauniainen. HRI works in co-operation with Forum Virium Helsinki, a non-profit company that develops digital services for citizens with public-sector organisations and private-sector companies.

Today www.hri.fi gives access to more than 1,000 datasets from the Helsinki Metropolitan Area cities and other public-sector sources for unrestricted use by anybody free of charge.

File:
openahjo.png