

Innovation Nippon the 1st Symposium 2013

Open Data and Innovation (1)

Date: September 12, 2013

Venue: GLOCOM (Center for Global Communications), International University

Speakers :

- Gaku Hashimoto, member of House of Representatives (Liberal Democratic Party)
- Kouhei Miki, Deputy Director-General at Chiba City's General Affairs Bureau (CIO aide)
- Hiroto Nagai, President of Water-Cell Inc.
- Kouichiro Fujii at Google's Head of Public Policy and Government Affairs for Japan
- Masahiko Shoji, Senior Research Fellow at Center for Global Communications and Representative of Open Knowledge Foundation Japan

Moderator :

- Tomoaki Watanabe, Executive Research Fellow at Center for Global Communications, Co-founder of Open Knowledge Foundation Japan, Executive Director at CommonSphere

Japan satisfies the multiple requirements for leading the world's innovations using open data. In fact, the government is set to promote open data through political leadership, and local governments and companies deploying advanced technologies continue to explore the use of data to create economic values. Yet, we can see further progress in open data implementations in countries like the United Kingdom. This symposium looked at the development of open data in Japan and overseas, and discussed its potential for driving innovations.

Mr. Masahiko Shoji, Senior Research Fellow at Center for Global Communications and Representative of the Open Knowledge Foundation Japan, delivered the keynote entitled, "The Frontier of Open Data: Challenges for Innovations". After introducing trends in open data and open government in Japan and overseas, he pointed out that challenges for innovation are: maintaining the motivation to disseminate the idea globally, creating initiatives one after another from local communities while continuously evolving, and delivering at a fast pace. He also emphasized the need for making something good in the face of domestic issues in Japan.

In the panel session, Mr. Gaku Hashimoto, member of House of Representatives (LDP) reported the developments in the government. The Abe administration released its ICT strategy “Declaration to be the World’s Most Advanced IT Nation” on June 14, 2013 with the aim to tackle the current stagnation and revitalize the nation by achieving the utilization of ICT at the world’s highest standard. It includes specific measures such as establishing rules for personal information, API and data formats to enable the “Realization of System Specifications for an Open Data Distribution Platform”.

The beta version of Japanese data catalog website was launched in 2013 and is set for full operation during FY2014, and is progressing to reach its goal of being at the world's highest standard by the end of 2015. The study group of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications has made recommendations for rule making on the use of personal data. Furthermore, with the intent to designate an independent third-party organization for realizing system development as an international standard, the entire government is determined to make prompt and concrete moves.

Mr. Kouhei Miki, Deputy Director-General at Chiba City’s General Affairs Bureau (CIO aide) pointed out that although data sharing has begun, the exit strategy for how to make use of the data is not yet visible. In order to overcome such conditions, he shared examples among local governments and public entities, such as setting common terminologies and examining Creative Commons Licenses.

Mr. Miki categorized the utilized data into three types: A. Small and open information provided by local municipalities, B. Big data collected from sensor networks that observe the natural environment such as air pollution and the water levels of rivers, and C. Big data such as medical and healthcare information and census registration data, and talked about exit strategies for each. In his efforts to demonstrate citizen-government collaboration, he shared the story of “Chiba repo”, an app that enables citizens to report issues in their communities to the city council, and work together for solutions.

Mr. Hiroto Nagai, President of Water-Cell Inc. presented “agri-note”, an app where farmers can enter farm records, spray records, and use aerial photographs to gain insights from the data. Using Google Maps and open data published by the government, the app allows farmers to keep records of fertilizers and pesticides, and enable them to apply PDCA cycles. Farmers can choose to publish their information publicly. Mr. Nagai said he hopes to counter today’s shrinking, hyper-aging farming population by opening up agricultural data to drive innovation. If agricultural and biological research institutions open growth and illness

data in the future, farmers can experiment with various methods and practice good farming.

Mr. Kouichiro Fujii at Google's Head of Public Policy and Government Affairs for Japan talked about the potential of monetizing government data. It is estimated that government data can generate 5.4 trillion JPY worth of economic effects. He explained different types of monetizing; Government to Business (GtoB) primarily in the new service/product development market, and Government to Consumer/Citizen (GtoC) in the app building market.

In the panel discussion, speakers exchanged their opinions on the importance of small data and local data. They also discussed the point that the future challenge is to make a network where various players can cooperate together to create value from open data.