

# Open Government



Edited by Daniel Lathrop and Laurel Ruma

**O'REILLY®**

Beijing • Cambridge • Farnham • Köln • Sebastopol • Taipei • Tokyo

# CONTENTS

	FOREWORD	xv
	<i>by Don Tapscott</i>	
	PREFACE	xix
<b>1</b>	<b>A PEACE CORPS FOR PROGRAMMERS</b>	<b>1</b>
	<i>by Matthew Burton</i>	
	Tipping Point: The Extinction of Pencils	4
	Competition Is Critical to Any Ecosystem	4
	Creating a Developer Corps	6
	Conclusion	8
	About the Author	9
<b>2</b>	<b>GOVERNMENT AS A PLATFORM</b>	<b>11</b>
	<i>by Tim O'Reilly</i>	
	Government As a Platform	12
	Lesson 1: Open Standards Spark Innovation and Growth	15
	Lesson 2: Build a Simple System and Let It Evolve	18
	Lesson 3: Design for Participation	22
	A Robustness Principle for Government	25
	Lesson 4: Learn from Your “Hackers”	29
	Lesson 5: Data Mining Allows You to Harness Implicit Participation	32
	Lesson 6: Lower the Barriers to Experimentation	34
	Lesson 7: Lead by Example	36
	Practical Steps for Government Agencies	38
	About the Author	39
<b>3</b>	<b>BY THE PEOPLE</b>	<b>41</b>
	<i>by Carl Malamud</i>	
	About the Author	47
<b>4</b>	<b>THE SINGLE POINT OF FAILURE</b>	<b>49</b>
	<i>by Beth Simone Noveck</i>	
	The Closed Model of Decision Making	50
	New Technologies and Civic Life	53
	Participatory Democratic Theory in the Age of Networks	58
	About the Author	69
<b>5</b>	<b>ENGINEERING GOOD GOVERNMENT</b>	<b>71</b>
	<i>by Howard Dierking</i>	

	The Articles of Confederation and the Stovepipe Antipattern	72
	Continued Maintenance: The Blob and Confederacy	77
	Conclusion	80
	About the Author	81
<b>6</b>	<b>ENABLING INNOVATION FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT</b>	<b>83</b>
	<i>by David G. Robinson, Harlan Yu, and Edward W. Felten</i>	
	Citizen Initiatives Lead the Way	83
	Providing for Reuse and Innovation	84
	Data Authenticity Down the Line	87
	Why Bother with Bulk?	88
	Conclusion	89
	About the Authors	89
<b>7</b>	<b>ONLINE DELIBERATION AND CIVIC INTELLIGENCE</b>	<b>91</b>
	<i>by Douglas Schuler</i>	
	Definitions and Assertions	91
	Democracy, Deliberation, and the Internet	95
	Findings and Issues	100
	Conclusion	103
	About the Author	104
<b>8</b>	<b>OPEN GOVERNMENT AND OPEN SOCIETY</b>	<b>105</b>
	<i>by Archon Fung and David Weil</i>	
	Transparency's Moment?	105
	The Dark Side of Open Government	106
	The Missing Diagnosis	108
	Targeted Transparency	109
	A Matter of Politics	111
	Conclusion	111
	About the Authors	113
<b>9</b>	<b>"YOU CAN BE THE EYES AND EARS": BARACK OBAMA AND THE WISDOM OF CROWDS</b>	<b>115</b>
	<i>by Micah L. Sifry</i>	
	Change.gov Shows How to Change the Gov	116
	"You Can Be the Eyes and Ears"	116
	Recovery.gov Site Still Under Construction	117
	Online Town Hall or "Participation Theater"?	118
	Open Data and Open Government	119
	Co-creation, Co-optation, or Collision?	121
	About the Author	122
<b>10</b>	<b>TWO-WAY STREET: GOVERNMENT WITH THE PEOPLE</b>	<b>123</b>
	<i>by Mark Drapeau</i>	
	Pockets of Excellence: The Goverati	124
	Conclusion	129
	About the Author	129

<b>11</b>	<b>CITIZENS' VIEW OF OPEN GOVERNMENT</b>	<b>131</b>
	<i>by Brian Reich</i>	
	The First “We President”	132
	The Internet Has Made Us Lazy	133
	Toward a Findable Government	135
	Advanced Citizenship	136
	Conclusion	138
	About the Author	138
<b>12</b>	<b>AFTER THE COLLAPSE: OPEN GOVERNMENT AND THE FUTURE OF CIVIL SERVICE</b>	<b>139</b>
	<i>by David Eaves</i>	
	The Coasean Collapse	140
	The Long Tail of Public Policy	141
	Patch Culture	143
	The End of Objectivity	144
	Two Preconditions to Government As Platform: Capacity for Self-Organization and Collaboration	146
	Extend the Network	148
	The Next Civil Service Culture: The Gift Economy	149
	Conclusion	150
	About the Author	151
<b>13</b>	<b>DEMOCRACY, UNDER EVERYTHING</b>	<b>153</b>
	<i>by Sarah Schacht</i>	
	Many Voices, Many Messages, One Government	153
	My Idea	155
	Revealing Obscured Government Data	157
	Improving Communication without Being Crushed by Email	160
	How to Improve Civic Engagement	162
	Conclusion	165
	About the Author	165
<b>14</b>	<b>EMERGENT DEMOCRACY</b>	<b>167</b>
	<i>by Charles Armstrong</i>	
	Democracy As a Scaling Mechanism	167
	Limiting Factors and the Internet	170
	Building an Emergent Democracy	171
	The Road to Emergent Democracy	175
	About the Author	176
<b>15</b>	<b>CASE STUDY: TWEET CONGRESS</b>	<b>177</b>
	<i>by Wynn Netherland and Chris McCroskey</i>	
	Tweet Congress: Build an App, Start a Movement	177
	Starting the Movement: We Are All Lobbyists Now	179
	So, Who Gets It?	180
	Impact	180
	Conclusion	182
	About the Authors	182

<b>16</b>	<b>ENTREPRENEURIAL INSURGENCY: REPUBLICANS CONNECT WITH THE AMERICAN PEOPLE</b>	<b>183</b>
	<i>by Nick Schaper</i>	
	Entrepreneurial Insurgency and Congress	183
	Congress Tweets, Too	184
	I YouTube, You YouTube	186
	Social Media and the Fight for Transparency	188
	Conclusion	190
	About the Author	191
<b>17</b>	<b>DISRUPTING WASHINGTON'S GOLDEN RULE</b>	<b>193</b>
	<i>by Ellen S. Miller</i>	
	The Bad Old Days: When Insiders Ruled	195
	This Is the Mashable Now	196
	What Comes Next	198
	About the Author	200
<b>18</b>	<b>CASE STUDY: GOVTRACK.US</b>	<b>201</b>
	<i>by Joshua Tauberer</i>	
	Opening Legislative Data	202
	Screen Scraping Congress	205
	Engaging the GovTrack Community	210
	Conclusion	211
	About the Author	211
<b>19</b>	<b>CASE STUDY: FOLLOWTHEMONEY.ORG</b>	<b>213</b>
	<i>by Edwin Bender</i>	
	Accessing Political Donor Data Fraught with Problems	213
	The National Institute on Money in State Politics' Role in the Fight for Greater Transparency	214
	Bolstering the Spirit of Public Disclosure Laws	216
	State-Level Transparency Faces Serious Challenges	217
	In an Ideal World: Recommendations for Open Data	219
	Conclusion	220
	About the Author	221
<b>20</b>	<b>CASE STUDY: MAPLIGHT.ORG</b>	<b>223</b>
	<i>by Daniel Newman</i>	
	Why We Founded MAPLight.org	224
	MAPLight.org's Unique Contribution	225
	Nuts and Bolts: Using MAPLight.org	227
	Barriers to Transparency	231
	Conclusion	232
	About the Author	232
<b>21</b>	<b>GOING 2.0: WHY OPENSECRETS.ORG OPTED FOR FULL FRONTAL DATA SHARING</b>	<b>233</b>
	<i>by Sheila Krumholz</i>	
	The Decision to Let Go of the Data	233
	It's Not Easy Being Open	234

	Creating a New Model for Transparency	236
	The Future Is Now	237
	Conclusion	238
	About the Author	239
<b>22</b>	<b>ALL YOUR DATA ARE BELONG TO US: LIBERATING GOVERNMENT DATA</b>	<b>241</b>
	<i>by Jerry Brito</i>	
	Liberating Government Data: Carl Malamud Versus the Man	241
	Disclosing Government Data: Paper Versus the Internet	243
	Accessing Government Data: Open Distribution Versus Jealous Control	244
	Demanding Government Data: Public Money Versus Private Research	245
	RECAP: Freeing PACER Documents for Public Use	247
	Conclusion	248
	About the Author	248
<b>23</b>	<b>CASE STUDY: MANY EYES</b>	<b>249</b>
	<i>by Fernanda Viégas and Martin Wattenberg</i>	
	Policy	249
	From Policy to Politicians	252
	Visual Literacy	254
	Conclusion	256
	About the Authors	256
<b>24</b>	<b>MY DATA CAN'T TELL YOU THAT</b>	<b>257</b>
	<i>by Bill Allison</i>	
	The How and Why of Data Collection	258
	Federal Data: Approximations Galore	259
	Good Data Doesn't Mean Good Results	262
	Conclusion	264
	About the Author	265
<b>25</b>	<b>WHEN IS TRANSPARENCY USEFUL?</b>	<b>267</b>
	<i>by Aaron Swartz</i>	
	Sharing Documents with the Public	268
	Generating Databases for the Public	268
	Interpreting Databases for the Public	269
	An Alternative	271
	About the Author	272
<b>26</b>	<b>TRANSPARENCY INSIDE OUT</b>	<b>273</b>
	<i>by Tim Koelkebeck</i>	
	Complexity Creates Opacity	275
	Transparency, Meet Institutional Inertia	276
	Kaleidoscope IT: One-Off Apps Obscure Information	278
	A Market Focused on Proposals, Not Products	280
	Framing the Window	284
	Conclusion	286
	About the Author	287

<b>27</b>	<b>BRINGING THE WEB 2.0 REVOLUTION TO GOVERNMENT</b>	<b>289</b>
	<i>by Gary D. Bass and Sean Moulton</i>	
	Government Transparency: Three Hurdles	289
	Putting It All Together: Disclosure of Federal Spending	297
	Conclusion	303
	About the Authors	304
<b>28</b>	<b>TOADS ON THE ROAD TO OPEN GOVERNMENT DATA</b>	<b>305</b>
	<i>by Bill Schrier</i>	
	What Is Government?	305
	Data Collection	306
	Exposing the Soul of Government	307
	Conclusion	313
	About the Author	314
<b>29</b>	<b>OPEN GOVERNMENT: THE PRIVACY IMPERATIVE</b>	<b>315</b>
	<i>by Jeff Jonas and Jim Harper</i>	
	Privacy-Enhancing Practices	316
	Conclusion	324
	About the Authors	325
<b>30</b>	<b>FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACTS: PROMISES AND REALITIES</b>	<b>327</b>
	<i>by Brant Houston</i>	
	The Act and Amendments	328
	Conclusion	335
	About the Author	336
<b>31</b>	<b>GOV→MEDIA→PEOPLE</b>	<b>337</b>
	<i>by Dan Gillmor</i>	
	Crowdsourcing in Action	340
	Conclusion	344
	About the Author	344
<b>32</b>	<b>OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE FOR OPEN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES</b>	<b>345</b>
	<i>by Carlo Daffara and Jesus M. Gonzalez-Barahona</i>	
	Advantages of FLOSS for Government and Public Agencies	346
	Best Practices: Management	350
	Best Practices: Technical	354
	Best Practices: Social	357
	Make It Easy to Experiment and Learn	359
	Conclusion	360
	References	360
	About the Authors	361
<b>33</b>	<b>WHY OPEN DIGITAL STANDARDS MATTER IN GOVERNMENT</b>	<b>363</b>
	<i>by Marco Fioretti</i>	
	Badly Used Technology Hinders Progress	364

	The Digital Age Explained	364
	Standards and the Problems with Digital Technology	366
	The Huge Positive Potential of Digital Technologies	369
	Free and Open Standards and Software: The Digital Basis of Open Government	370
	Conclusion	372
	About the Author	373
<b>34</b>	<b>CASE STUDY: UTAH.GOV</b>	<b>375</b>
	<i>by David Fletcher</i>	
	A Historical Perspective	375
	What Today's Landscape Looks Like	376
	Champions Discovered in All Branches of State Government	378
	The Dramatic Shift to Web 2.0 Principles and Tools	381
	Making Data More Accessible	383
	Conclusion	387
	About the Author	388
<b>A</b>	<b>MEMO FROM PRESIDENT OBAMA ON TRANSPARENCY AND OPEN GOVERNMENT</b>	<b>389</b>
	INDEX	391