Improving Service and Communication with Open Data

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Sunlight Foundation

Sunlight Foundation works to make government more transparent and accountable.
The enactment of state and local open data policies helps achieve that goal.

WHERE & WHEN
What is “open data”?  

Information that is:

- Available online
- Available in a machine-readable, structured, non-
  proprietary format
- Available for use and reuse without legal encumbrance

Why are governments adopting it?  

To increase governmental capacity.

- State and local government employment down since recession
- Pace of technological change in private sector
- Need to gain additional value from existing work products
Benefiting from non-governmental users

- Better awareness: data inventories reveal extent of data holdings
- Better access: shared data portal makes data-sharing seamless
- Better evaluation: obtain data about wider variety of program outcome measures
- Better data: more eyes on data – additional quality check

Also benefits internal users
What can we do with open data?

- Improve governmental efficiency
  - Improve service targeting
  - Reduce duplicative work
- Increase innovation through new partnerships
- Improve two-way communication about problems

Publicly explore problems
Make better decisions

Data Kind: Optimal NY tree pruning

Data Science for Social Good:
Relationship between crime and and broken street lights

Improving access to public service

Check your eligibility for benefits in Chicago & Illinois
Eligibility requirements can be difficult to find, we’ve created a process that makes it easy

Erase your Illinois juvenile record!
If you were arrested in IL when you were under 18, you probably have a juvenile record.
A juvenile record does not go away on its own, and you’re better off without one. The good news: most juvenile records can be erased through a process called juvenile expungement.

Juvenile Expungement 1-2-3

1. Find out if you’re eligible!
2. Get your arrest information
3. Apply for expungement
Communicating Out

Bringing New Information In
Increasing Opportunities for Participation

How do we apply this to your data?

• Improving utility of insurance product disclosures and policy information
• Improving utility of collected data: rate changes, costs, complaints, claims, closed investigations
General Open Data principle: Make data available for use and reuse

- Take it **OUT** of the pdf - put it out there as tabular data
- Connect with your local data-using communities:
  - Developers
  - Academic researchers
  - Journalists
  - Data-using non-profits
- Do a little marketing! Advertise your data on social media, set up a contest for data-use, make it part of your landing page.

Doing the work yourself is an option...

- If so, use a focus-group led design process to put your data where people need it.
  - **Focus groups** can help clarify what information your users want for their purposes.
- Data integrated with other processes is most useful. Data shouldn’t live primarily on your site, it should be available at the point of decision.
- For maximum integration, consider creating shared data standards
Making Model Disclosures: Pew example

Getting other people to use your data is an option!

Consumer Complaint Database
We share complaints about financial products and services to improve the financial marketplace.

What happens when I submit a complaint?
When you submit a complaint, we forward your complaint to the company and work to get a response about your issue.

What information do you publish?
We publish information about the subject and date of the complaint and the company’s response. We do not share any personal information with the public.
Policy Brief: The CFPB Consumer Complaint Database
A Snapshot of Complaints from Illinois

Executive Summary

This policy brief looks at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s (CFPB) online consumer complaint database and examines Illinois complaints by issue and product with the national complaint data. Using data from the CFPB’s July 2017 report and Illinois complaints data from June of 2011 through August 11, 2015, the brief looks at the CFPB consumer complaint database (CFPB), which was designed to respond to the large number of consumer complaints received by phone and mail and to improve regulatory enforcement. The CFPB’s complaint database includes complaints by issuers of financial products and services, with the number of complaints increasing from 3.4 million in 2011 to 4.7 million in 2013.

How Lenders Can Use CFPB Complaint Data to Improve Performance

For more than two years now, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has been collecting complaint data across several different product areas in financial services including credit cards, mortgages, consumer and student loans, and banking and account servicing. The stated reason of the CFPB is to use this data to educate consumers about their financial providers.

First steps

- Figuring out what data you have
- Figuring out what goals you have for its use

Looking forward to the conversation!