Measurement of Open Government: Metrics and Process

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Abstract

When the Obama Administration released its Open Government Directive (OGD), agencies received specific guidelines regarding the development of Open Government Plans. The OGD did not offer agencies guidance on how to assess the attainment of open and transparent government through the implementation of their plans. This paper describes the practical realities of measuring U.S. federal agency transparency and open government initiatives. The paper describes the development of a measurement framework, assessment tool, and methodology that is being used by the OpenTheGovernment.org organization and partners in 2010-11. The paper presents preliminary findings using a measurement tool the study team developed and discusses the lessons learned to date using this instrument. The paper also addresses the importance of open engagement with stakeholders, our experiences with online public comment tools, and issues associated with collaborative measurement development. The paper offers recommendations to those engaging in the measurement and assessment of open and transparent government.

1. Introduction

On his first day in office, President Obama committed his administration to an “unprecedented level of openness in Government” by adopting three guiding principles of openness (Obama, 2009):[1]

- **Transparency.** Agencies should treat information as a national asset and empower the public with the information needed to hold the government accountable.
- **Participation.** Agencies should inform and improve government decision-making by tapping into the citizenry’s collective expertise through proactive engagement.
- **Collaboration.** Agencies should cooperate among themselves and with nonprofits, businesses, academia, and the public to better accomplish the work of the government.

The administration operationalized its Open Government Initiative with the release of the ambitious Open Government Directive (OGD) (Orszag, 2009).[2] The OGD focused on specific areas to address openness, including, but not limited to:

- **Routine agency information publication.** Agencies should regularly and without prompting should make information available such as schedules of activities and information rollout with milestones, metrics, statistics, and visualizations for gauging performance and promoting accountability.
- **Pre-emptive distribution.** Engaging in proactive information dissemination promotes an informed and engaged public, speed of access, decreasing costs of processing requests, and ready access to government information.
- **Timeliness.** Systematic and regular information availability facilitates information sharing, data publication, and an exchange of information with the public, organizations, and other agencies.
- **Innovative use of technology.** By using social media technologies, creating data (e.g., data.gov) and accountability (e.g., recovery.gov) portals, agencies and the public would have access to a range of ways to interact with and access government operations, programs, and data.
- **Feedback mechanisms.** Through feedback, agencies could better correct data, assess what information to publish, respond to queries, and otherwise engage the public in agency operations.
- **Senior official designation.** To raise the priority of open government efforts, agencies were required to designate a senior official to oversee quality of information and response.

In short, the OGD sought to deliver greater openness, transparency, and accountability – but more significantly to provide a mechanism through which to promote institutional transformation.
2. Assessing Open Government

Agencies had to develop and issue their open government plans by April 7, 2011 – just five months after the release of the OGD. And although the OGD laid out a roadmap for agency open government efforts through a series of requirements (e.g., seeking feedback from the public on the plan, identifying and making available “high value” datasets, identifying their FOIA practices), it failed to provide an assessment framework that answered the following key questions:

- What metrics should agencies use to ascertain the efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of their open government efforts?
- What is successful open government, and who defines success?
- What are best practice open government processes, programs, and implementations?

Allowing agencies maximum flexibility to define open government within the agency’s mission and service requirements would enable ownership and a better integration within the agency’s structure. Without any benchmarks or assessment parameters, however, it is difficult to ascertain the overall impact of agency efforts.

2.1 Developing an Assessment Approach

Given the lack of evaluative metrics within the OGD, and to foster a collaborative assessment approach, OpenTheGovernment.org (OTG) partners and other allies in the openness community met with the interagency Open Government Working Group several times to discuss how the plans should be evaluated, and to give agency personnel feedback on early drafts of their open government plans. During one of these meetings, the Working Group outlined plans to recognize agencies for exceeding the requirements of the Directive in three major categories of open government plan content:

1) **Leadership, governance, and culture change.** These included a central location for open government information for employees and public – laws, policies, regulations, training contacts, key officials; statements on the ways in which transparency, participation and collaboration can help agencies achieve better results; and share all materials, results, tools, training, etc. that could be transferable to other agencies, with the Interagency Working Group as a means to centralize best practices.

2) **Transparency.** These included a role for public input on data/information prioritization; the development and population of a directory of data/information that are not currently public; and the posting and updating of key FOIA processing metrics (size of backlog, FOIA requests received, processed, full disclosures, partial disclosures, etc.) on the agency Open webpages.

3) **Participation and collaboration.** These included the plans for each participation channel should be open for public input/feedback before the agency finalized their plan; examples of public impact on agency activities should be collected centrally by the agency for analysis of successes with at least key examples being posted on their open government webpages; and efforts to solicit participation should include mechanisms to inform participants of the outcome and explain the agency’s responses to the major ideas raised by the participation.

To launch the initial plan evaluation effort, OpenTheGovernment.org and its coalition recruited more than a dozen volunteers with experience working with agencies and evaluating information policies from partner organizations, academia, and other organizations that serve the public interest to participate in an initial assessment audit of the plans. The initial review included all agencies with a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and the components of the Executive Office of the President (a total of 30 entities), and was intended to provide each agency with feedback from the evaluation as part of an ongoing assessment strategy to chart the progress of agency open government efforts over time. The OTG coalition also offered to re-evaluate any plan that was updated by the end of June 2010.

The results of the initial assessment are available at https://sites.google.com/site/opengovtplans/. The below sections describe in more detail the initial and ongoing methods, metrics, and tools by which the OTG coalition continue to evaluate agency open government initiatives.

3. Methodology for Assessing Agency Plans

The OTG coalition engaged in an iterative methodological design process that included the...
development of overall assessment criteria as described in the previous section, discussion with the agency and White House staff, and inclusion of researchers familiar with performance measurement and assessment methods and techniques. The design strategy employed allowed for an evolutionary assessment tool development and measurement approach, thus ensuring valid and reliable data collection.

The approach also provided an opportunity to have government agency input into the measurement process. Though this had the potential to introduce bias into the process, the study team found this to be advantageous for a number of reasons, including:

- Increased buy-in from the agency community. The primary point to the evaluation was to assess, but help, agencies in their transparency initiatives.
- Increased usability of the measurement tool. The study team reviewed a number of measurement scales, approaches, and techniques. Given that the government community would also participate in the assessment exercise further in the process, most of the measurement matrices proved too complex for practical use.

Though the study team worked collaboratively with the agency community, the team undertook steps to ensure valid and reliable data collection, such as working with the open government (non-government) community to solicit feedback and engage in tool pre-testing.

The components of the initial evaluation form were drawn directly from the language of the OGD. The evaluation was not a compliance audit but, rather, the scoring system used was intended to evaluate the strength of each agency’s overall plan in meeting the requirements of the OGD. For example, the OGD compelled agencies to release “high value” data sets and mandates to “improve participation” and “improve collaboration.” Each of these parameters was accompanied, however, by some amount of qualification, which introduced further opportunities for subjective interpretation that percolated through measurement tool development and subsequent execution of an instrument.

Given instrument feedback from the pre-testing efforts, and given that there was little previous work in terms of open government assessment tool development, the decision was made to apply a dichotomous rating scale (pass/fail) that referenced a criterion such as the presence of an artifact (e.g. the agency states a date and deliverable of an open government plan item or does not). This approach reduced the error resulting from poor goal description and also from inter-rater variation in shared agreement that increases with the number or level of rating criteria (e.g., the agency states a date and deliverable that is inadequate, adequate, more than adequate).[3,4,5]

3.1 Developing the Measurement Tool’s Scale

Another important consideration in developing a measurement tool was the utility of a measure that could yield comparative data between federal agencies that were subject to the directive. This requirement meant that the underlying scale items needed to sum to produce ordinal scale data - that is a scale that reveals at least a rank order tied to an underlying variable. The approach adopted, shown in Table 1, was a three point scale criterion-referenced scale which was tied to satisfactory or unsatisfactory results. In this scale “0” was assigned when the open government plan component was not addressed and a “2” was assigned to plan components that were complete. A rating of “1” was possible in circumstances where the plan component was mentioned but lacking critical elements of planning such as actual dates and deliverables. The scale was further modified to accommodate the transparency community’s desire to recognize government agencies that went “above and beyond” the minimum interpretation of the OGD. Thus, a “3” was assigned to any plan component that exceeded the requirements stated in the directive. To improve consistency of these use of what would be termed “extra credit” points, the raters were provided with a list of criterion circumstances where a “3” would be appropriate.

For scoring purposes, the three point core scale was used to determine whether the plans met the directive since a plan with all components rated “2” were considered plans that met the requirements of the directive. The scores were shown as both total score and basic score plus all bonus points.

The maximum basic score (exclusive of bonus points) for an agency was either 58 or 60 – depending on whether an agency has original classification authority, as the OGD included a requirement regarding classified information. All components of the government that have such authority under President Obama’s Executive Order on Classified National Security Information [6] are assumed to have responsibility for meeting the OGD’s declassification requirements (maximum basic score of 60). For all other agencies, the maximum basic score was 58. Final rankings were
based on the overall score the plan earned (including bonus points) out of the agency’s basic score. The scores were shown as both total score and basic score plus all bonus points.

Evaluators were asked to complete their evaluations on worksheets that include space for score justifications. To create a degree of consistency among the evaluations, the evaluators met prior to beginning their work to discuss standards for grading each plan. Additionally, the evaluators used a Google Group to circulate and discuss particularly thorny questions about how an agency should be graded on a particular component. For example, as the Directive is silent on what constitutes a “significant FOIA backlog,” the evaluators decided to set the threshold as “a backlog at the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 that is larger than 10% of the number of FOIA requests received in FY 2009, as reported in the agency’s annual FOIA report.” The scoring guide at the top of the evaluation form for each agency noted whether or not the agency exceeded this threshold, and directed evaluators to score only the corresponding element (either agency has a plan to reduce the backlog, or agency has no significant backlog).

After the worksheets were completed, OpenTheGovernment.org checked each form to make sure all of the components were scored as directed. If the score on any particular component seemed out of line with how other evaluators were scoring similar plans, OpenTheGovernment.org alerted the evaluator to the discrepancy, and asked for further justification. OpenTheGovernment.org pulled together overview observations from (discussed with and refined by) the evaluators.

More than a dozen volunteers from partner organizations, academia, and public-interest groups joined OTG in an audit of 30 agencies' information policies, which were mandated in the OGD. The results, released to the public in April 2010 showed that agencies with a historic tendency toward transparency tended to produce stronger plans. In addition to providing each agency with feedback from the audit, OTG offered to re-evaluate any plan updated by the end of June 2010. Audit results, follow up reviews and other related materials are posted on OTG's Evaluating Open Government Site (https://sites.google.com/site/opengovtplans/).

### Table 1: Criteria used by OpenTheGovernment Raters for Open Government Plan Evaluations Scoring Guide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Agency does not include the component in the plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Agency includes an aspirational reference to the component; &quot;a plan to plan&quot; without concrete steps and dates to accomplish the plan does not fulfill a requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Agency fulfills the requirement; if an agency plan to meet a requirement describes concrete steps and dates to accomplish the goal, it fulfills the requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Agency exceeds requirement (bonus point); please review the non-exhaustive guide of examples of practices that may qualify an agency for receiving a “3,” and document your reason for assigning the bonus point</td>
</tr>
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Note 1: The "basic score" for this agency, which assumes the agency fulfills all requirements is 60 points; this plan may have a score of more than 60 by exceeding requirements. No single component can have a score higher than 3.

Note 2: Agencies will have EITHER no significant backlog, OR a plan to reduce backlog; for this evaluation, a "significant backlog" is defined as reporting a backlog at the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 greater than 10% of the FOIA requests received in FY 2009.

### 3.2 Addressing Known Challenges

The initial assessments were limited in scope and focused on the compliance with the OGD requirements. From the onset, the evaluation team realized that a next evaluation phase would be necessary to assess how well each government agency was performing against their stated plan. Learning from the Plan evaluation process, the evaluation team pursued a new measurement approach based on the following:

- **Development of a true four-point scale.** Given that there was no additional clarification on what the Administration considered sufficient progress regarding the implementation of agency plans, the effect of insufficient rating criteria would be magnified. Table 2 articulates the new scale.

- **Inclusion of an agency self-assessment guide.** An all-volunteer evaluator community introduces a range of variability into the assessment process. Given the great value all parties reported from dialog and mutual understanding, OTG met with the Administration and proposed a framework for agency self-evaluation that would be
subject to “spot auditing” to encourage high levels of adherence. Self-assessment also brings the benefit of giving those who have the deepest knowledge of their programs, the opportunity to emphasize accomplishment as opposed to simply activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Initiative progress is insufficient and not likely to be implemented satisfactorily (the majority of public data sets or other information stated in the plan information have not been released as planned)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Initiative progress is partial and the results available are insufficient (the majority of planned data sets or other information stated in the plan have been released but behind schedule by more than 90 days or is less comprehensive than described in the plan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Initiative is working as described in the plan and results are satisfactory and no more than 3 months late (the majority of planned data sets or other information stated in the plan have been released within 90 days of plan dates and do not deviate from scope described in the plan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Initiative is working as described or better than described in the Plan and results are comprehensive and on schedule (the majority of planned data sets or other information stated in the plan have been released on schedule or earlier than plan dates and conforms with the scope described in the plan or enhancements beyond plan were released)</td>
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These two changes and additions create a more robust assessment framework against which to measure agency open government plans and progress towards reaching the goals of open government.

### 3.3 Measurement On Multiple Levels

The OGD issued by President Obama sought the kind of reformation of the public sector that can only happen when the effort of each agency connects efficiently with relevant constituencies. The least effective result of this activity would be new layers of status reporting about lists of activities completely devoid of the social or economic value created. In order to recognize reform that is having effect, the measurement framework was expanded to deconstruct the Open Government activities into three broad segments: Availability; Use; and Impact.

Availability evaluates the agency’s progress in making available to the public, data, information, or public engagement activities and events as described in their open government plans (see Table 4). Evaluating the “availability” of opportunities for participation and collaboration is more complex, however, than that for information and data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Initiative progress is insufficient and not likely to be implemented satisfactorily (no single participation event was conducted as scheduled in the Open Government Plan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Initiative progress is partial and the results available are insufficient (a participation event was conducted but had fewer than 100 participants (physical and virtual combined))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Initiative is working as described in the Plan and results are satisfactory and no more than 3 months late. (a participation event was conducted within 90 days of plan dates and had sufficient attendance (physical and virtual combined)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Initiative is working as described or better than described in the Plan and results are comprehensive and on schedule (a participation event was conducted on schedule or earlier and is as described in the plan or enhanced beyond plan)</td>
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Use addresses the level of interest or utilization of the data or information. This dimension of openness reveals the order of magnitude of interest in what is being shared (see Table 5). One justification for the measure is to discourage low value data set dumping or poorly promoted webcasts or public comment venues by introducing a notion of accountability for how well these programs are working and how effectively they are reaching reasonable approximations of stakeholder communities. Here again scale development is experimental and assumed to required fieldwork to refine and improve. Little is known about what
resources and tools each agency has at its disposal to monitor and report against this dimension – aside from the general and common feedback that this is highly unusual in the course of agency work currently. The decision was made not to over specify specific types and metrics and allow the agency community to reveal the best insights they are capable of at this time.

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<tr>
<th>Table 5: Self-Assessment Scale Proposed for Use of Data Initiatives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public data sets scheduled for release.</strong> <em>(When determining level of progress, select the level of delivery that would fairly characterize the majority of datasets or other information planned to be delivered by the date of this review. Please see example criteria by each progress indicator.)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a paragraph of text and with any supporting tables or graphs, please describe the levels of distribution of the data and information described in the plan. Ideally, “hard data” such as downloads or page views is desirable but if those metrics are not available, a simple narrative of classes of users who you believe to have accessed the information is also of use. Agencies are encouraged to use free, off-the-shelf syndicated measurement services such as quantcast, Compete, or Hitwise when working with their own websites. If there are measures that you believe would best capture use of the information but are not available to you, please include such a wish list in this section.

Impact addresses the level of impact that the data or information achieved *(see Table 6). Effective transparent and participatory government requires the development of standards for recognizing value creation. Just as in the private sector, measuring value is a complicated exercise. Our proposal to the Administration is first ask how the agency community would define the value of these initiatives giving the benefit of the doubt that in the details of each program lies very specific goals for success. Consistent with the approach to measuring Use, the instrument suggests directions for exploration borrowed from approaches used in the private sector by communications firms but with the knowledge that at this stage, the major benefit of the question is the consistency in inability to answer it.*

<table>
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<th>Table 6: Self-Assessment Scale Proposed for Impact of Data Initiatives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public data sets scheduled for release.</strong> <em>(When determining level of progress, select the level of delivery that would fairly characterize the majority of datasets or other information planned to be delivered by the date of this review.)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a paragraph of text and with any supporting tables or graphs, please describe the impact a single or several new data sets or information types have had. Ideally, the response would reference objective data about impact *(e.g., number of pages of search engine results that reference the initiative, articles in trade publications, blog references, popular press references/reuse, or number of “Tweets” about it)* - but if those metrics are not available, a simple narrative of classes of users who you are aware of working with the information is also of use. If there are measures that you believe would best capture use of the information but are not available to you, please include such a wish list in this section *(e.g. media monitoring tools or PR agency services).*

Together, these three areas of measurement move the assessment of agency open government initiatives beyond plan development and compliance and into key areas of availability, use, and impact. In short, while the initial assessment framework evaluated the extent to which agencies complied with the OGD, the subsequent framework moved towards the outcomes of agency plan implementation.

4. Issues and Recommendations

This section discusses selected issues that the study team encountered in the development and deployment of its measurement tool. The section also offers recommendations for those engaging in the assessment and measurement of open government efforts by federal agencies.

4.1. Collaborative Evaluation – Strengths and Weaknesses

One of the great strengths of this project is the deep and on-going participation from our volunteers – without whom the work would not be possible. In exchange for their assistance, volunteers have been given the opportunity to interact extensively with open government leaders in the Administration, and at specific agencies.

Though the study team began the process in collaboration with agencies and the Openness Working Group, participation from the government community faded. And while both the government officials and our project members worked together not only on the evaluations but, in some cases, on a one-to-one basis, the agencies represented at the Working Group to some degree resisted being evaluated by outside groups and being evaluated on criteria that have not come directly from the Administration. This was particularly the case with regards to the “openness
how agencies met the federal government to perhaps paving the way for directives, progress can be

for enforcement activities, April 27, 2011, the Administration has been somewhat inconsistent in its attention to pushing the agencies to promote greater openness of information beyond data. Both as part of the work on evaluations and as part of a larger push for openness for accountability, the openness community has pushed the Administration on the “openness floor” – with some minimal success. On Monday, March 14, 2011 the Administration announced it would, in furtherance of meeting the President’s goal of “unprecedented transparency” direct agencies to “proactively provide information about their regulatory compliance and enforcement activities, so that the public can hold both regulated parties and agencies themselves more accountable.” Agencies also were directed to proactively post agency directories on their Open Government web pages, “so that citizens can more easily identify agency offices to meet their needs,” an item on the openness floor. The White House announcement also specifically called on agencies to post official congressional testimony and agency reports to Congress required by statute, which should bring all agencies one step closer to meeting our requirement for all information officially exchanged between the executive and legislative branches to be publicly available.

But it is important to note that since the initiation of this project, the Administration has refocused openness and transparency as a separate initiative and folding it into two key areas: 1) Customer Service, and 2) Agency performance. On April 27, 2011, President Obama issued Executive Order 13571 – Streamlining Service Delivery and Improving Customer Service, which incorporates aspects of openness and transparency as a means through which to provide enhanced customer service by agencies. On August 17, 2011, the Office of Management and Budget released its memo (M-11-31) on Delivering Efficient, Effective, and Accountable Government, and a key aspect of performance management, according to the memo, is “Open and transparent government that engages the public” (http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/memoranda/2011/m11-31.pdf, p. 1).

4.2. Ambiguity and/or Lack of Evaluation Criteria

The OGD was not written to include specific outcome levels and therefore does not offer a measurement framework to use for program evaluation. In developing the OGD, the Administration made a conscious decision to not be prescriptive in terms of how agencies met the requirements of the Directive. This decision was intended to both encourage agency innovation and to promote buy-in. The language of the OGD perhaps reflects the wide range of readiness of the federal agency community and could have been issued as a call to all in the federal government to “do more” to be transparent and collaborative regardless of current level. Thus, agencies such as NASA and HHS which operate at high levels of openness – and the DOJ which does not operate at as high a level of openness – could be doing more than the little it has done. The decision has had cascading effects, however, on the possibilities for evaluation of the government's progress in meeting the President’s goals.

As this paper reveals, directional policy without benchmarks or specific increments of improvement is akin to diagnosing fever without a thermometer. The path forward from the OGD policy presents few options. Some in the transparency community have abandoned the OGD as a specific vehicle for change and have resorted to bringing their own measures and minimum standards in the tradition of advocacy. Others, many of whom identify with Government 2.0 and similar reformation movements of the past, lean on engagement with government as the path forward and that beyond policy directives, progress can be made through collaboration with the agency community through social media and open data initiatives.

Last, there are also movements building in other countries which bring their policies and platforms into the mix perhaps paving the way for international standard of openness that emerge from a global community of policy makers and activists in pursuit of more open government.

4.3.Cross Agency Measures
The goal is to create an overall assessment framework, but the challenge is agency variation in goals, objectives, and mission. The OGD achieved its intent to encourage individual agencies to innovate and to get their buy-in to some extent, but the agency plans vary greatly and are not easily comparable. The wide range of service missions of federal agencies poses legitimate challenges in comparative evaluation of the kind described in this paper. The State Department operates in a very different fashion than the Department of Education or Commerce. Is there one scale that can measure across agencies without presupposing commonality in constituency, function and purpose let alone scale. In manufacturing, the measurement community solves this partially by concepts such as incremental and systematic improvement of the kind espoused in “lean manufacturing” where annual percentage improvements are constantly sought regardless of baseline. Consumer brand marketers use tracking studies of representative samples of consumers to determine how their brands compare with others in their industry and across industries. Increasingly these big brands use social media tracking to gauge impact. Perhaps there are methods that can be borrowed from this industry as well. If not, the cost of flexibility and buy-in has been to make it difficult for both the government and for the external community to meaningfully evaluate either individual agency and government-wide progress in achieving the goals of the Administration’s Openness Initiative.

4.4. Compliance Versus Impact and Outcomes

The lack of evaluation criteria limits measurement to compliance. All that can be evaluated is individual agency progress toward completion of its plan. Compliance is only a first, not last, step. Key objectives are impact, use, and availability. The findings in this paper address only the sophistication of government in making information more available and government more welcoming of interaction. The work to be done is on higher value planes where notions like “impact” and “return on investment” can be examined. Virtually all of the agency representatives who worked with this evaluation effort shared the common sentiment that making data available can be a very difficult process. There is general exacerabation at the thought that agency accountability could evolve to include consideration of how much use is made of the data and information. Finally, the idea that an accounting can be made of the social impact of this information has been met anecdotally with complete disbelief. This begs the question again about what the purpose of the OGD if not to surface socially useful information that is many cases works its way into non-profit and for-profit services. Just as the Open Government community points to financial reporting requirements, weather and GPS data as sources of tremendous “aftermarket” value creation – can we begin to measure the impact of the rest of government data and information?

5. CONCLUSION

Though the OGD offered agencies guidelines regarding the development of their Open Government Plans, the Directive did not offer agencies guidance on how to assess the attainment of open and transparent government. This paper described the development of a measurement framework, assessment tool, and methodology used by the OpenTheGovernment.org organization and partners in 2010-11. The paper identified issues in developing the methodology, tools, and conducting a large-scale collaborative assessment. Through an evolutionary process, however, the project demonstrated that open government metrics are possible, but that there is a need for continued refinement.

In addition to assessing the attainment of open and transparent government, the primary goals — for the openness community both within and outside the government — are a more accountable government and meaningful public participation in governance. Both the efforts at measurement described here and the “openness floor” are intended to push in these directions.

6. References


