Keynote: The Promises and Pitfalls of Open Urban Data

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Abstract. Open data portals are springing up around the world. Municipalities, states and countries have made available data that has never been as accessible to the general public. These data have led to many applications that have informed the public of new urban conditions or provided information to make urban life easier. However, it should be clear that these data have limitations in the effort to solve many urban problems because in many cases they do not provide all of the information that is needed by government and NGOs to get at the cause or at least correlations of the problem at hand. It is still necessary to have access to data that cannot be made public to address some of most serious urban problems. While this seems just to apply to public access, it is also the case that government employees or those with legitimate access to the necessary non-open data lack access because of legal, organizational, privacy, or bureaucratic issues. This limits the promise of increasing data-driven efforts to address the most critical urban issues. Solutions to these problems in the context of ethical behavior will be discussed.

Keynote Speaker

Robert Goerge is a Senior Research Fellow at Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago with more than 30 years of research focused on improving the available data and information on children and families, working closely with and advising federal, state, and local policymakers to develop new sources of data. Dr. Goerge developed Chapin Hall's Integrated Database on Child and Family Programs in Illinois, which links the administrative data on social service receipt, education, criminal and juvenile justice, employment, healthcare, and early childhood programs to provide a comprehensive picture of child and family use of publicly provided or financed service programs. He is also a Senior Fellow at the Harris School of Public Policy and at the UC Computation Institute. He is a co-designer of the Master's of Science degrees in Computational Analysis and Public Policy at the University of Chicago. He is co-chair of the International Society for Child Indicators.