Web-COSI
Web Communities for
Statistics for Social Innovation
INCREASING TRUST IN COLLECTIVELY GENERATED STATISTICS

# Web-COSI "Web COmmunities for Statistics for Social Innovation"

www.webcosi.eu

**SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME**
ICT-2013.5.5 Collective Awareness Platforms for Sustainability and Social Innovation
Coordination and support actions (Coordinating actions)

**Grant Agreement Number 610422**
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## Deliverable 3.1

## Activity: (Webinar/online discussion)

## Making Data More Accessible for Society at Large

**Partner in charge:**
**OECD**

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**Deliverable 3.1**

**Title:** Making data more accessible for society at large: the role of open data, communication and technology

**Partner in charge: OECD**

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# Deliverable 3.1

## Activity: Making data more accessible for society at large: the role of open data, communication and technology (webinar/online discussion)

## Summary

As agreed with partners at the Consortium Kick-off meeting in Rome, January 2014, it was decided that the webinar would take the form of an online discussion in order to involve the maximum number of participants in the conversation.

The online discussion was open from the 11 -24 June (14 days) and explored the role of open data, communication and technology in making data more accessible for society at large.

Participants of the discussion were asked to address the following questions:

- What role can Open Data play to increase citizen's engagement with well-being and progress statistics?
- How can data visualisation and storytelling be used to increase our understanding of data?
- What are the best examples of crowd-sourced data related to well-being and progress?
- How else can technology or other innovative methods be used to make data more accessible to society at large?

The discussion achieved extensive engagement and knowledge exchange, that is highlighted by the following:

- **60 comments** from 22 different participants,
- With over **1,520 page views from 1,147[1] different people** (refer to Annex 2), and
- Engaged over 124 twitter accounts and **reached over 164,600 Twitter accounts**.

The discussion successfully achieved its objectives and a conversation on the role of open data, communication and technology in making data more accessible was timely, allowing us to identify new partners and initiatives and enabling an exchange of experiences, ideas and good practice.

The content of the discussion will inform the design of other activities of the Web-COSI project.

[1] Source: Google Analytics from 1 June – 21 July 2014

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## 1. Purpose of the activity

### *1.1 To explore the role of Open Data, communication and technology in making data more accessible for society at large and highlight good practice.*

1.1.1 The main purpose of the online discussion was to crowd-source knowledge and examples from a community of practitioners, experts and engaged citizen on how open data, visualisation, and other technology-based approaches such as data-gathering through mobile apps can enable all members of society to contribute as data consumers, data interpreters and even, data producers.

### *1.2 To identify and foster a new community within the Wikiprogress platform who have expertise in open data, communication and technology that makes data more accessible for citizens.*

1.2.1 Future Web-COSI deliverables will require input from partners who have expertise in making data more accessible to citizens and this discussion was an opportunity to hear from initiatives, and to bring new relevant participants into the Wikiprogress community. This discussion and community will be pertinent for the development of the Wikiprogress.Stat open-source data portal and the two upcoming workshops on "Using Technology to Engage Citizens with Wellbeing Statistics". Many of the contacts from this discussion will be invited to participate in workshop and case studies may be further explored for Web-COSI reports.

### *1.3 To provide substantive input for the preparation of future Web-COSI deliverables, and in particular, the Report on Citizen Dialogue on well-being and societal progress, and the workshops on Using Technology to Engage Citizens and the redesign of Wikiprogress.Stat.*

1.3.1 The contributions from the online discussion will directly inform: i) the preparation of Deliverable 2.3, a report that will bring together the results of the two online discussions as well as the mapping exercise to set out best practice and lessons learned from Europe and around the world; ii) the design and content of Deliverable 3.4 and 4.4: two workshops on "Using Technology to Engage Citizen in Well-being Statistics", the former aimed at civil society and the latter at National Statistics Agencies and Governments and, iii) the development Deliverable 3.3, the Wikiprogress.Stat open portal that would hugely benefit from any support and profiling that this particular community could provide.

### *1.4 Profiling the Web-COSI project to a global community*

1.4.1 Web-COSI has been publicized on the home page of Wikiprogress since the beginning of the 2014 and has been referred to in blogs and newsletters. This online discussion has enabled significant exposure to a much broader audience than Wikiprogress has previously reached, particularly via our social media campaigns. This conversation build upon previous the previous discussion to create momentum in the lead to other Web-COSI activities such as reports, workshops, launch of Wikiprogress.Stat and the Wikiprogress University.

## 2. Set up of the activity and its execution

### *2.1 Concept note*

2.1.1 Firstly the title, purpose, key questions and target audience for the discussion were agreed within the Wikiprogress team. A concept note was drafted which set out the background, objectives and intended reach of the discussion. The note was used to clarify the scope of the discussion, and in particular to provide background and context for communication purposes (see Annex 1).

2.1.2. The title "Making data more accessible for society at large" with a focus on "the role of Open Data, communication and technology" was decided upon, reflecting the exact the title of Deliverable 3.1. "Accessibility" can be interpreted in a number of different ways, and we wanted to reflect this in the discussion, with a particular focus on the potential of Open Data, data visualisation and other communication methods, and other innovative uses of technology.

2.1.3 The concept note outlined the four questions that discussant would be asked to address: 1) What role can Open Data play to increase citizen's engagement with well-being and progress statistics?; 2) How can data visualisation and storytelling be used to increase our understanding of data?; 3) What are the best examples of crowd-sourced data related to well-being and progress? And ; 4) How else can technology or other innovative methods be used to make data more accessible to society at large? The questions was chosen in order allow a diverse range of participants to engage in the discussion and for us to identify a broad range initiatives and examples.

### *2.2 Partner engagement*

2.2.1 A call for partners was made via the eFrameNet 'Alert' (200 subscribers), Wikiprogress (WP) eBrief (32,500 subscribers) and via the respective Web-COSI and partners sites and social media channels. Seven discussion partners were selected including: CIVICUS, Data-Pop Alliance, Partnership for Open Data, PARIS21, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, Ushahidi 'Making All Voices Count' and Web-COSI partners.

2.2.2 Most partners other than PARIS21 were new to the Wikiprogress community, and were introduced to the Web-COSI projects. All partners were briefed on their role in the discussion, which included promoting the discussion to their networks and actively participating in the discussion.

### *2.3 Preparation of platform and analytics*

2.3.1 A dedicated online discussion page was designed and set up on the Wikiprogress site at:

http://www.wikiprogress.org/index.php/Online_Discussion_Making_data_more_accessible_for_society_at_large

2.3.2 The discussion platform Disqus was embedded in the page and tested. Web short links were prepared and the Twitter hashtags **#CitizenEngagement** and **#StatsForAll** were chosen for tracking and profiling though web and social media analytic tools.

### *2.4 Communication and outreach*

2.4.1 Invitations to join the discussion were: i) sent to all partners who then disseminated the information via their networks; ii) emailed to the Wikiprogress mailing list and; iii) profiled via respective e-bulletins and newsletters and social media.

Four guest blogs and one context setting blog (refer to Annex 6) were posted in the lead up to the discussion. A social media campaign was run alongside the discussion to engage a wider audience in the conversation. Facebook profiled videos by participants related to the topic and several people commented via Twitter (refer to Annex 4 and 5).

### *2.5 Moderation*

2.5.1 The discussion was actively moderated for the full 14 day duration, including evenings and weekends. This entailed checking that new comments were appropriate for the conversation and accepting them to be posted to the discussion, dealing with any technical issues that arose, replying to questions, and posting comments to keep the flow of the discussion moving.

## 3. The results achieved and the open issues

### *3.1 Crowd-sourcing of knowledge on 'the role of Open Data, communication and technology in making data more accessible for society at large'*

3.1.1. Participants represented different sectors of society, including government, research organisations, social enterprise, and civil society. For this discussion, over 50% of those who left comments were from civil society organisations. The discussion allowed us to establish initial contact with relevant initiatives and to obtain an initial snapshot of good practice with respect to how Open Data, communication and technology have and can be used to make data more accessible. The quality and range of comments have provided a good base for us to design the follow-up workshop, and to finalise the report on best practice.

### *3.2 High levels of participation and interaction between participants*

3.2.1 According to Google Analytics (Annex 2), the discussion page received:

- over **1,377 page views** and 1,018 unique visitors between 1 and 24 June 2014, and
- a total of **60 comments** from 23 participants.

3.2.2. In general, there was a lot more spontaneous interaction on Twitter than in previous discussion, with people tending to respond to questions and referring to previous comments in their discussion.

### *3.3 Successful outreach to a wider audience*

3.3.1 Social media was successfully used to reach a wide audience (see Annex 5 for some examples):

- Over **120 Twitter** accounts engaged in the discussion by either commenting, retweeting or 'favouriting' tweets
- According to "Tweet Reach" (see Annex 3) during the discussion the hashtag #StatsForAll had an estimated reach of **737,906** Twitter accounts between 12 and 17 June 2014. Total reach over the 9 days was over **850,000** Twitter accounts a record for our discussion.
- On Facebook, over 594 people saw posts related to the discussion.

3.3.2 The five blogs posted on the ProgBlog (see below) collectively received over **1,356 page views**, on top of the 200 + subscribers that receive the blogs via email.

- Democratising data: the need to make statistics more accessible to everyone (611 page views)
- Talking 'bout a (data) revolution? Then let's make it truly revolutionary (206 page views )
- What's missing from the data revolution? People (224 page views )
- Data-Pop Alliance: a global alliance and call for a people-centered Big Data revolution (205 page views)
- Increasing Youth Involvement in the Data Revolution (113 page views )

### *3.4. Engagement of new partners and participants in the Wikiprogress and Web-COSI community*

3.4.1 Finally, a number of individuals and organisations were introduced to Wikiprogress and Web-COSI for the first time through participating in the discussion, either as a partner or a discussant. Five groups became Wikiprogress discussion partners for the first time, and a number of people contributed to the discussion who had not participated in Wikiprogress activities before, including CIVICUS, Data-Pop Alliance, Partnership for Open Data (World Bank, Open Knowledge and Open Data Institute), Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations and Ushahidi 'Making All Voices Count'

## 4. Conclusions/Next steps

The objectives of the online discussion were met and a conversation started on the role of Open Data, communication and technology in making well-being data more accessible for society at large. The discussion created a momentum, identified a new community for Wikiprogress and connected a diverse range of participant's ideas and good practice. The profiling and number of people reached and engaged for this activity were extensive.

The number and diversity of comments has bought to surface sufficient examples, ideas and initiatives for the preparation of report and the design of workshops. The next step would be to foster and develop this community, to build upon this success to ensure the Web-COSI project uses the knowledge acquired for future activities.

In terms of specific follow-up actions leading on from this discussion, the following activities will be undertaken:

i) Contributions will be reviewed and synthesized to provide initial content for the report on "Mapping initiatives' best practice: the results of citizen dialogue on well-being and societal progress" (Deliverable 2.3).

ii) The knowledge and contacts will inform the design and content of two workshops on "Using Technology to Engage Citizen in Well-being Statistics", the former aimed at civil society and the later at National Statistics Agencies and Governments (Deliverable 3.4 and 4.4).

iii) The development of Wikiprogress.Stat will be benefit from the information obtained and from the support and profiling that this particular community could provide (Deliverable 3.3).

Individuals and organisations who joined the Wikiprogress community through the discussion will be contacted on a regular basis to maintain contact and to identify potential participants for the forthcoming workshops

**ANNEX 1**

**Contextual information related to the online discussion provided in communication materials and on the discussion home page**

***Context***

*The purpose of this online discussion is to take a broad look at the opportunities and challenges of using open data, visualisation, and other technology-based approaches to making data more accessible for society. We would like to hear from people who are dealing with these issues in their work and research, and also from people who are new to the topic but would like to participate in the debate to learn more.*

Information is knowledge, and knowledge is power. In order to empower citizens and ensure they have the information they need, we need to find innovative ways to make data more accessible for society at large. "Accessibility" can mean different things in this context.

**Open Data**

First, it can mean making data more freely available for people to download, use, and share with others. This is the principle behind the Open Data movement, which encourages governments and other organisations to make all kinds of data that are relevant to people's lives completely transparent and available to all. Engaged citizens can use open data to make better-informed decisions, to hold governments and other institutions accountable for their actions, and to contribute to finding solutions to social problems. For many, open data is also the key to the "data revolution" needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Communication**

Not everyone has the time or the ability to make the most out of raw data though. A second way of making data more accessible is through effective communication. Data producers, or "intermediaries" such as bloggers, data journalists, campaigners, and other communicators, can make the underlying meaning of data more easily understandable through the use of effective storytelling. Effective data visualisation, in particular, can be an immensely powerful way of conveying the sense of complex analysis in clear and simple terms for a broad, non-expert audience.

**Interactive Technology**

Finally, accessibility can also refer to ease of participation. Interactive technologies such as mobile apps and crowdsourcing platforms, can enable all members of society to contribute as data producers, not just data consumers. Citizen-generated data is a relatively new field, but one with a large potential to collect information that is directly relevant to people's well-being, in a low-cost and timely manner. Innovative projects such as Mappiness, OpenStreetMap, HarrasMap, and Moodometer demonstrate the wide range of uses of crowdsourced data.

The purpose of this online discussion is to take a broad look at the opportunities and challenges of using open data, visualisation, and other technology-based approaches to making data more accessible for society. We would like to hear from people who are dealing with these issues in their work and research, and also from people who are new to the topic but would like to participate in the debate to learn more.

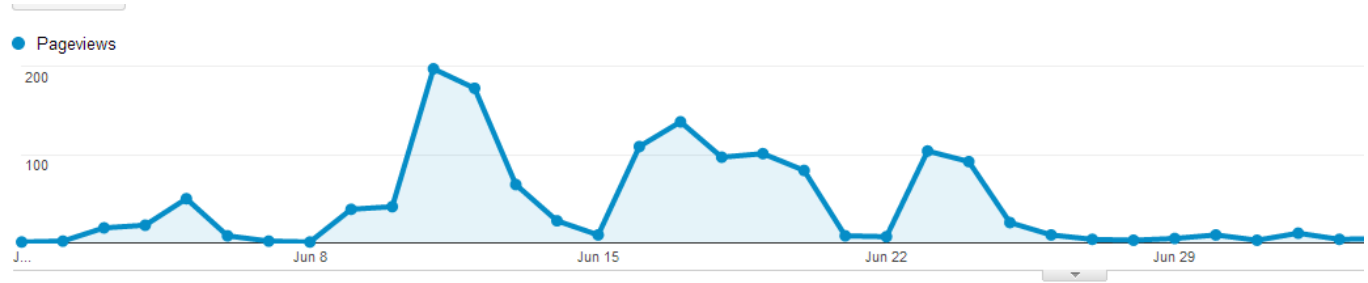
***Background***

The OECD is one of four partners in a European Commission-funded project called Web Communities for Statistics and Social Innovation (Web-COSI), whose overarching aim is to ensure 'Statistics for Everyone'. Over two years, Web-COSI will be exploring innovative ways to increase public engagement with the production, promotion, and use of 'beyond GDP' statistics and data. Wikiprogress will be conducting a number of activities in 2014 to this end.

## ANNEX 2

### Analytics results for the discussion page and blogs

***Page views and unique visitors for online discussion page between** 1 June and 21 July 2014 (Google Analytics)*




Primary Dimension: Page Page Title Other

Plot Rows | Secondary dimension | Sort Type: Default

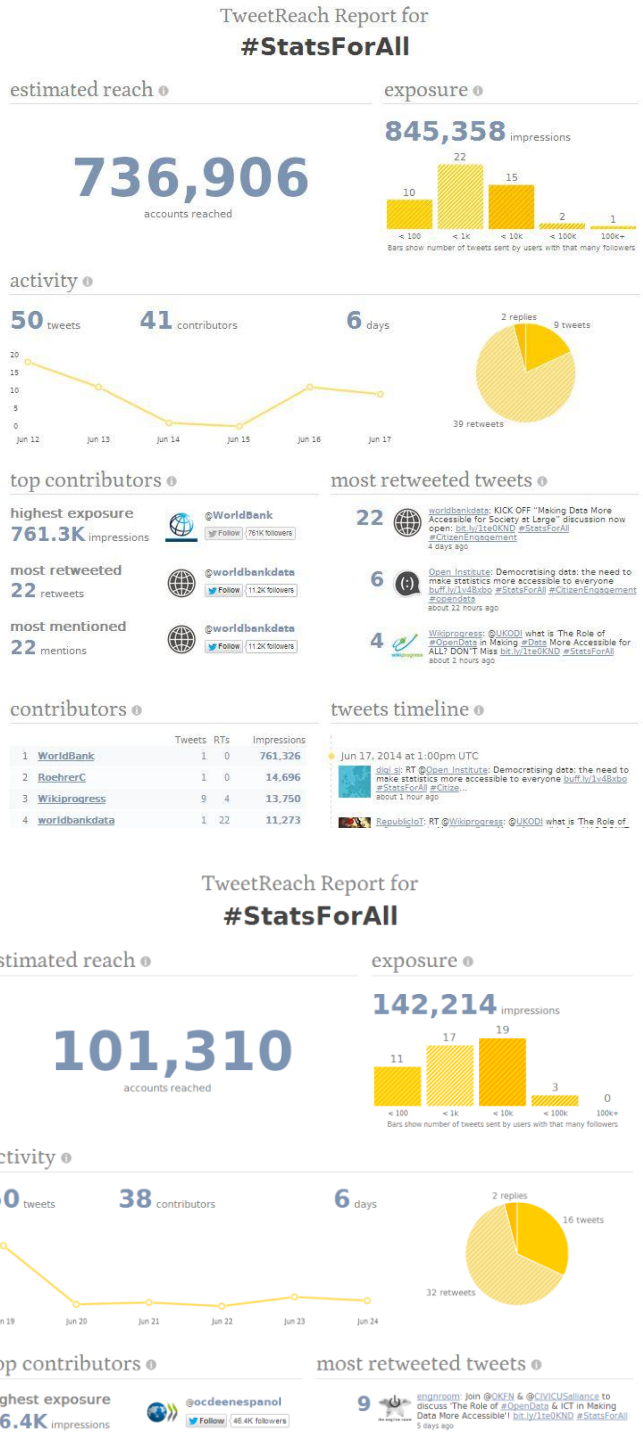
| | Page | Pageviews | Unique Pageviews |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1,520 % of Total: 4.27% (35,583) | 1,147 % of Total: 3.83% (29,927) |
| 1. | /index.php/Online_Discussion_Making_data_more_accessible_for_society_at_large | 1,466 (96.45%) | 1,112 (96.95%) |

***Page views for blogs** between 1 June and 21 July 2014 (Blogger Analytics)*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Increasing Youth Involvement in the Data Revolution | Big Data, crowdsourcing, Data Journalism, data revolution, data visualisation, Melinda Deleuze, open data, wikichild | 113 20/06/2014 |
| Data-Pop Alliance: a global alliance and call for a people-centered Big Data revolution | Alex 'Sandy' Pentland, Big Data, citizen engagement, Claire Melamed, data revolution, Data-Pop Alliance, Emma Samman, Emmanuel Letouzé, online discussion, Patrick Vinck, Phuong Pham | 205 12/06/2014 |
| Democratising data: the need to make statistics more accessible to everyone | Democratising data, Kate Scrivens, online discussion, open data, visualisation and storytelling | 611 10/06/2014 |
| What's missing from the data revolution? People. | Beyond 2015, CAFOD, citizen engagement, data revolution, Neva Frecheville, online discussion, Post-MDGs | 224 10/06/2014 |
| Talking 'bout a (data) revolution? Then let's make it truly revolutionary | Ben Taylor, data revolution, online discussion | 206 08/06/2014 |

**ANNEX 3**

**TweetReach report for the hashtag #StatsForAll between 12 and 17 June 2014 and between 19 and 24 June 2014 (hashtags established especially for the discussions)**



**ANNEX 4**

**Examples of comments from online discussion “**

DustinStoltz: RT @Wikiprogress: Interested in making data more accessible for ALL? #OpenData JOIN US! bit.ly/1te0KND @RobKitchin @ianschuler @les...
about 21 hours ago

RobKitchin: RT @Wikiprogress: Interested in making data more accessible for ALL? #OpenData JOIN US! bit.ly/1te0KND @RobKitchin @ianschuler @les...
about 23 hours ago

Jun 23, 2014 at 12:00am UTC

am_eromz: Online Discussion Making data more accessible for society at large wikiprogress.org/index.php/Onli... via @Wikiprogress
1 day ago

axelheitmueller: RT @datapopalliance: MT @Wikiprogress: Why Data-Pop Alliance is calling for a people-centered #BigData #datarevolution @medialab http://t.c...
1 day ago

OKNRW: RT @Wikiprogress: "What are the issues that need to be kept in mind when working with Open Data?" asks @katescrivens -Any ideas? HERE http:...
1 day ago

Oosterenvan: Data Debate: democratizing & making it accessible, visual, beautiful, useful & crowdsourced #OpenData bit.ly/1kXxziO @Wikiprogress
2 days ago

JaimeSotoMuoz1: RT @Wikiprogress: "#Opendata can play a key role in fostering innovation in governance and accountability " says @kiwanja -Join us now! htt...
2 days ago

Tineka_S: RT @Wikiprogress: If YOU think #Opendata can encourage #citizenengagement, join us! bit.ly/1te0KND @debbie_wicks @Tineka_S @leedsci...
4 days ago

berlinsights: Online Discussion Making data more accessible for society at large wikiprogress.org/index.php/Onli... via @Wikiprogress
4 days ago

CitizensFNDN: Join @OKFN & @CIVICUSalliance to discuss The Role of #OpenData & ICT in Making Data More Accessible! bit.ly/1te0KND v/ @Wikiprogress
5 days ago

WHOCCStAndrews: RT @Wikiprogress: Interested in "Making Data More Accessible for Society at Large" #CitizenEngagement Join us! bit.ly/1te0KND @r4is...
5 days ago

Jun 19, 2014 at 12:00am UTC

PhilaEnergyGal: RT @Wikiprogress: @PhilaEnergyGal Interested in #opendata & #citizenengagement ? Discuss how to make #data more accessible for all! http://...
5 days ago

JAlatorreGDL: RT @Wikiprogress: If #OpenData is "the oil of the new economy" then let's talk about the things that are fueled by this oil @WorldBank http...
5 days ago

## Annex 5

**Facebook –** collectively the 9 post related to the discussion on facebook reached 880 people


**Annex 6**

**Discussion Blog**

## Democratising data: the need to make statistics more accessible to everyone

*The world of statistics is changing: traditionally the domain of experts alone, new technologies and methods of communication have the potential to open up a range of different data to new audiences, and to make statistics more accessible to everyone. From 11-24 June, Wikiprogress is hosting an online discussion on the role of open data, communication and technology in making data more accessible for society at large. This blog, by Kate Scrivens, Wikiprogress Project Manager, sets out some of the key issues for the discussion.*

***Data of the people, by the people and for the people**…*

For centuries, the primary purpose of government data, from the Domesday Book to the present day, has been to inform decision-making at the very highest levels. However, the last decade or so has seen an increasing movement towards 'democratising data', and making statistics available that are more relevant to a broader public. The shift towards a 'beyond GDP' mind-set, focusing on developing better and broader measures of people's well-being, is an essential step in developing statistics that are more relevant to people's lives. But democratising data is also about ensuring that relevant statistics are more easily accessible to a wider public.

Thanks to the internet and other innovative technologies, people can engage with data in an increasing number of ways: not only as consumers of new types of information, but also as interpreters, communicators and even producers of data.

***People as data interpreters: the power of Open Data***

Open data are data that people are 'free to use, re-use and redistribute — without any legal, technological or social restriction', according to the Open Knowledge Foundation. By opening up previously restricted data – from government and other sources – for universal use, citizens have the chance to be much more directly involved in decision-making, and to be better informed about issues that affect their own well-being. For example, people looking to move to a new town, can compare data on air quality, schools, hospitals, or other factors that matter most to them in order to select the best place to live. They can also use the same data to shine a spotlight on areas where improvement is needed, thereby strengthening the accountability of government and other institutions.

Opening up access to data can be empowering, but not everyone has the necessary skills or patience to make the most of raw data. Open Data has the biggest impact when they are made available in an easily accessible format by people acting as 'data interpreters', with the necessary analytical and technical skills to re-use the data in innovative, new ways, such as creating mobile apps and other technologies. For example, publicdata.eu, showcases a large selection of apps created using European public data, from an app to monitor carbon monoxide emissions across Europe, to one helping road users identify traffic accident hotspots. For the power of Open Data to be evenly shared across society, however, capacity-building is crucial. Organisations such as theSchool of Data, exist for exactly this purpose: to provide engaged citizens with the skills they need to make the most of data. For many, this kind of power shift is the true meaning of the "data revolution" (read more here and here).

***People as data communicators: visualisation and storytelling***

Creating mobile apps is just one way of re-using data. An equally powerful way of making statistics more accessible to a broader audience is through the use of storytelling to convey the underlying meaning of the data. This can be done by the data producers themselves (such as government or statistical agencies) or by intermediaries such as data journalists, civil society organisations or anyone with an interest in finding the best way to communicate the key messages of datasets. Stories can be told in the traditional way, through narrative text, or they can be conveyed in a more visual manner - through infographics and charts that organise the data in such a way that the meaning is immediately apparent. Data visualisations can be incredibly beautiful, but their importance goes beyond aesthetics: they provide a unique means of highlighting new patterns in statistics and looking at the world in a different way. Visualisations can be static, or they can be interactive and dynamic, such as the animated trends from Gapminder.org, which visualise the evolution in development indicators such as child mortality and HIV prevalence to gain new insight.
Telling a story around statistics, either through words or visualisations, is not without its pitfalls and data communicators need to be responsible storytellers, not misrepresenting the data to meet their own needs. Data visualisation as a mass communication tool is a relatively new discipline and a better understanding of best practice and good examples would be a helpful resource for data communicators.

***People as data producers: crowdsourcing statistics through digital technology***

Finally, digital technologies mean that members of the public can have greater access to statistics by participating themselves as data producers. The prevalence of accessible yet sophisticated mapping technology through mobile platforms provides a means to crowdsource data from members of the public. While this is a new area, there are a number of examples of crowdsourced data related to progress and well-being statistics such as Mappiness - an app to monitor levels of subjective well-being in the UK, Open Elm Map – which uses community-generated data to track Dutch Elm Disease, Harrassmap – which uses crowdsourced data to highlight sexual harassment hotspots in Egypt, and the Ushadi platform, which was originally used to track political violence in Kenya and which now encompasses a number of open-source platforms. Crowdsourced data is perhaps the ultimate in democratising data: empowering people to be producers as well as consumers of data.

***Best practices and good examples***

It is clear that making data more accessible to society at large covers a broad range of issues. Technological advances provide a huge potential for democratising data, but many of these areas are new or evolving quickly. There is a need to identify best practices and good examples in the areas of Open Data, visualisation, and crowdsourcing technologies in order to provide guidance to those interested in making data more accessible.

*Kate Scrivens, Wikiprogress Project Manager*