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Towards A Flow State

A Prologue by Aditya Dev Sood

Imagine the situation of a bus route and bus schedule run by a municipal agency. In response to citizen engagement and dialogue they agree to release their schedule along with frequency and real time data to the public. A number of startups immediately launch new mobile apps that allow the public to interact with and use this data and the overall transit experience of the city improves. Meanwhile, the user data generated through these apps is also back-channeled to the transit and transport backend, and it is mined to continuously improve and refine bus routes and other aspects of the service in general. This is not utopian. It is a new kind of idea about the State. It is very real and very practicable. In some ways it is already happening in part and in places around the world. And this is what we should properly mean when we speak of a Flow State — a kind of governance which is nothing more than a curation and stewarding of public data flows out to the citizenry and back to the machinery of government.

One of the greatest challenges in achieving relationships and flow of data such as we have characterized as ‘Flow States,’ is the uncertainty of where and how such data may be abused, and how existing power dynamics might have to be disrupted or overcome in order to achieve such states of flow. In public dialogues held at the Vihara Innovation Campus with representatives of different political parties, we have seen time and again a preference for retaining government operations data as confidential in order to limit media exposure and avoid criticism of government performance. But it is not only governments who need to be worried. Now that large geolocative citizen data sets are available to private partners of the government they are easily and routinely leaked, resulting in minor irritations of marketing calls or the major horrors of specific communities being targeted during riots or public disturbances. How in other words do we reconcile the public’s need for better managed actionable data, with the private individual’s need for privacy?

Sunil Abraham, one of the cofounders of the Design Public process and the Executive Director of the Center for the Internet and Society in Bangalore, has offered a kind of sliding scale gradient through which data openness should be evaluated. The more it pertains to you as an individual, the more restricted it should be. The more it pertains to government functioning, the more open it should be. In actual practice, of course, things seem to operate in reverse, with most government information unavailable except through specific request.
In the highly charged, adversarial, and mutually mistrustful space of the public sphere, one may hope to make progress in improving the State’s use of data for improved public services only incrementally, through dialogue, consultation, prototyping and demonstration of particular applications of data sets to particular uses that actually work, while not at the same time creating new undesirable data externalities.

It is fortunate that we have the Open Government Data Platform & National Portal of India, working within the National Informatics Cell (NIC), dedicated to asking and answering questions of how to manage the extraordinary amount of data collected by government agencies. What is simultaneously required, however, is a process whereby new civic and public uses of this data may be imagined, elaborated and developed, and requests made for data to then be opened to the public. This is in some ways similar to the approach we, at the Center for Knowledge Societies, had taken at the fifth edition of Design Public and at the ensuing Governance Startup Weekend, where we brought together a community interested in working together on public services using data, whether open or self-generated.

In future, this form of collaborative interaction may be further routinized, to ensure that new initiatives are continuously taking shape and that their outcomes have the opportunity to flourish as civic innovation startups.

Dr. Aditya Dev Sood

Dr. Aditya Dev Sood is a serial social entrepreneur with a background in Design and the Social Sciences. Sood is the founder and CEO of the Center for Knowledge Societies, an innovation consulting firm, focused on user research, user experience design, design strategy and systems innovation. He is also the chairman of the Bihar Innovation Lab (BIL), supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Adianta School for Leadership. His most recent venture, the Civic Innovation Lab is a new initiative focused on citizen participation, open data and the citizen-centric delivery of urban services. Since 2011, Sood has routinely convened the Design Public Conclave dedicated to exploring how innovation can serve the public interest.
Three distinct approaches to governance innovation are seen in India today: citizen activism, the open data and open governance agenda, and the integration of design and innovation into government processes. Representatives from each of these spaces, including Somnath Bharti, former Law Minister, Government of Delhi, Sunil Abraham, Executive Director, Center for Internet and Society, Aditya Dev Sood, CEO, CKS and Chairman, BIL, were invited to a panel discussion moderated by Namrata Mehta, Director for Innovation, CKS.

**Namrata Mehta**: What I want you to do is not think of politics at all, and a lot of those controversies that have occupied our minds over the last couple of weeks. What this is really about is understanding a new way of thinking about governance innovation. Each of you have been involved in changing government in a very different way, so I would like to start by asking each one of you what do you think about citizen centric governance, do you believe the government should be citizen centric? Is that a motherhood statement we all should believe in?

**Somnath Bharti**: Citizen centric government - that is what Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is all about. A term we have been saying time and again- “mohalla sabha” is direct participation of the citizens into government. But first I want to say something which we all need to understand. Two months ago, I was on that side of the table. There I experienced what sort of government, infrastructure and structure we have. Whatever has been happening from the last 67 years has happened more peripheral. The very day AAP was formed - we also formed 35 sub-committees because the administrative, legal, judicial, police framework, haven’t gone through any significant change from its conception. That is, there have only been patchworks in form of small bylaws.

Unless and until the framework left over by the British is changed from the point of view of good governance by the Indians for the Indians-nothing will change.

Secondly, Unless you have good people joining politics-nothing will happen. That is why I want to invite all good intent people, professionals, educated professionals, to come and join politics. Governance won’t change unless you participate.
Sunil Abraham: Actually I use internet itself as a case study to understand the concept of citizen centric government. There has been a crisis in trust as far as the internet is concerned. The US is no longer seen as the primary responsible steward of the internet. So the present government in cooperation with the internet government organizations that take care of names and numbers (I-Star), are holding a very important meeting—NETmundial—next month in Sao Paulo, Brazil. This meeting is going to determine the future of what is called the multi-stakeholderism. So far, four multi-stakeholders have been invited to the table on equal footing to determine internet policies—the private sector, civil society, technical and academic community and the states or the government. Clearly, in this model, interests of each stakeholder are not seen as completely aligned. So let’s for a moment look at the mission of this particular event. At Design Public we are examining whether design can be used in interest of the public. So the public interest is clearly distinct from citizen interest. If citizens get it completely their way—whether it is privacy or the intellectual property—if the interest of all the other stakeholders are compromised—just to make sure that citizens get their interest protected then in the long term they are not maximising public interest. Citizens should definitely be a key stakeholder, perhaps in some cases be part of decision making process—but we can’t run the world with only one stakeholder’s interest in a short sighted pattern. I think it takes specialization in each of these sectors to do the job well. If your party manages to have a brain drain from civil societies, it will be a bad news because civil societies also require competence.

Aditya Dev Sood: I think it was March 18th 2011—when we were gathered in the Taj ambassador to have the first of these dialogues at the same time—the Anna movement just had its first demonstration and at that point because of that incident a lot of media persons were asking us questions regarding what were we trying to do—is it something related to the Anna movement? And we were like, “No, that is a completely different headline and this is something different. Don’t confuse it.” And honestly it has been a long journey for us to understand that probably we can’t be successful in bringing the change we want to without talking about it to people, the citizen mobilization side or the people in the political arena itself. In the past, when we have had other state and central government in there haven’t been a lot of urgency on the political and government side to hear our ideas about change—whether it was technological change or design led change—so it is a cross-sectoral dialogue and where there are incremental opportunities for some steps forward and we should try to take those steps forward.

The other thing I want to talk a little about is, there is something fundamentally corrupt about systems. They have lost their missions. So if they are unclear about their mission, then that’s actually the beginning of corruption. Then you know there are some valuable and effective criticisms that have been developed by the representatives of the Aam Aadmi Party, the Anti-Corruption Movement and the Anna Movement about dysfunction and corruption, the nexus between dysfunction and corruption and in many cases, the intentional reservation of dysfunction. But before that, there is the loss of mandate. Why does the Directorate of Health and Family Welfare exist? Given that mandate, what should be its competencies, what should be its processes? If that has been lost then there is no question but that all kinds of corruption will ensue.

Sunil Abraham: Actually I use internet itself as a case study to understand the concept of citizen centric government. There has been a crisis in trust as far as the internet is concerned. The US is no longer seen as the primary responsible steward of the internet. So the present government in cooperation with the internet government organizations that take care of names and numbers (I-Star), are holding a very important meeting—NETmundial—next month in Sao Paulo, Brazil. This meeting is going to determine the future of what is called the multi-stakeholderism. So far, four multi-stakeholders have been invited to the table on equal footing to determine internet policies—the private sector, civil society, technical and academic community and the states or the government. Clearly, in this model, interests of each stakeholder are not seen as completely aligned. So let’s for a moment look at the mission of this particular event. At Design Public we are examining whether design can be used in interest of the public. So the public interest is clearly distinct from citizen interest. If citizens get it completely their way—whether it is privacy or the intellectual property—if the interest of all the other stakeholders are compromised—just to make sure that citizens get their interest protected then in the long term they are not maximising public interest. Citizens should definitely be a key stakeholder, perhaps in some cases be part of decision making process—but we can’t run the world with only one stakeholder’s interest in a short sighted pattern. I think it takes specialization in each of these sectors to do the job well. If your party manages to have a brain drain from civil societies, it will be a bad news because civil societies also require competence.

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SB: The day I took over, I called a meeting of secretaries, and none of the four
departments – art and culture, tourism, law, administrative reform, had a policy document! When I asked them, how do you function, they answered, “Saahab jo mantri kehte hain wo karte hain” (we do what the minister asks us to do). There is no clarity in the system. That is why we need qualified professionals to come into the governance. It is only then that we can talk about some sort of paradigm shift from this scenario to the model where citizens are the focus – where the citizens are the ones who will orient the government towards the future of change.

NM: So there is change that needs to be brought about, maybe the nature of democracy has to change- there has to be a paradigm shift- but what are the approaches towards making it happen? And Sunil maybe you can talk about how far can the open data movement can go to achieve a type of transparency and accountability? Another approach is citizen activism- which Somnath Bharti- you could talk about and then is innovation really the key? Does government need to innovate and what does it look like?

SA: The question that I am trying to answer is if we introduce technology, if we introduce databases and concepts like open data and transparency- is it going to eliminate corruption or is this going to breed corruption? With every generation of corruption busting technology which does not have trust build into it- which does not take the human side of engineering very seriously- that does not adequately appreciate that every form of regulation will be gained by vote, there will be a new generation of corruption. This is war between those who are corrupt and those who are honest, and technology supports really both sides of the war. So I wouldn’t want to be simplistic and say that just because we have technology and databases, it does not mean we can address this problem. It would be an ongoing challenge.

ADS: I feel that we are on the side of pushing counterparts either on the civil society- activists movements or on government to a new kind of conversation- where we are saying we want better civic services- can I use social media- mobile media, feedback mechanisms to talk back into the state-can I use grievance redressal system in some way to push the state to do what we want it to do? That is another way we are talking about citizen centricity where if I may come back to your propagation, Sunil, the accumulative- the wisdom of the citizens as a whole, leads to the interest of the public- the massification of individual preference allows us to see broad trends which can allow resources to be allocated in optimal, in accumulative and inclusive ways – all of this is possible because the technology exists, media exists, the telecommunication networks exists, the mobile devices exist, everything exists. So we want to know why can’t we build those feedbacks mechanisms and get the state to do what we want it to do?

SA: So what you are proposing Aditya may work in a society that has ubiquitous connectivity. In India we have only about 10-15% population online and about just 7% who have time to spend online. So let me bring power as a concept in the discussion. My solution is that transparency expectations should be directly proportional to power and privacy protection should be inversely proportional to power. What we should be obsessed about is the small data at the top of the pyramid and not the big data at the bottom of the pyramid. If we introduce participatory mechanism through few channels on social media- then there is a probability that people who are already in it will capture this participatory process. When participatory budgeting was done in Bangalore- how many do you think in Bangalore have the guts to go to gilded campuses of Infosys and spend the whole day, spend their daily wage and contribute to the government? As I said, the moment we come up with a solution- the first thing you should ask is- how is that solution to be gained and once we realize how it will be gained- we need to have further additional channels (mobiles, face to face meeting in the slums) in order to eliminate the unwanted consequences.

SB: Technology is a tool. It depends on the intention of the person behind the technology to use it for good or bad. How do we make sure that the person in power and behind technology works in best interest of the country? I have seen both sides of the world now. It’s not too big a mystery of how to give good governance. If the citizens take a resolve that the winning person is honest, and of unquestionable character, then good policies are manageable.

NM: Getting back to the idea of citizen activism and if it is what we need in parallel to optimization of privacy vs. openness.

SB: When I was in the government every person who comes to the office has to be heard because they give brilliant ideas, it was my duty to serve them. Citizens need to be instrumental in assuring that the people who come to power do not use money or muscle power to come to governance. Managing votes is easy but now each of us should make sure that the people fighting elections should face the public and answer their questions.

NM: What brings you back, Aditya, to look at urban India and city space and change of government?

ADS: Our view is that responsible electoral politics is a good, necessary, valuable thing, but insufficient. What is also required is some new thinking about how to use the distributed technologies that are at our disposal. First of all, make clear what citizen preferences are and then to allow distribution of authority / power
into the citizens at large. To my mind these are distinct from electoral politics. What I really want is to focus our energy around is to say a given kind of distribution of communication that is now possible in every region of the world, can we do better in terms of the public services we provide to the population of India’s metropolises and can we partner with then to envision Government 2.0. Can we get them to collaborate with service providers and decide upon say for example- what bus routes, what kinds of scarcity or trash management or water services they require, that’s what I am still trying to formulate and I think, this is come to ahead. The Aam Aadmi Party’s victory in Delhi in the recent elections signals a kind of demographic shift. It signals final succession in a way of urban India from rural India kind of political structures. So if that’s right then urban India is actually demanding for better services than it has yet been able to receive. Voting the right people in power from any party may be a part of the solution but I don’t think any of those ministers and even civil servants are going to be able to do the job without the right kind of technical inputs which is what a lot of us can provide.

NM: Can we go back to the question of competencies that people would require to be more involved as citizens in determining how public services are delivered?

SB: You know earlier, whenever I used to visit an MLA or an MP, with small problems like sewer not getting through or water pipe is leaking. Throughout the day you keep checking with the MLA about what happened with the sewer problem. This fellow will not respond to you. He has a PA that tells to come at a specific time and the problem will remain as it was. Then you become hopeless. Unless and until the people’s representatives’ aims and goals match the aspirations of the citizens his goal will be completely different, to make 500 crores. What I did the day I was elected was that I developed a website called aapconnect.com. What does it do? It takes your input, your name, your address, your phone number, your email and then you write your problem to the water department. The moment you click submit button, it generates 3 SMSes. One goes to the correct person, the officer, who is supposed to be taking care of this thing. One goes to the user and one goes to my office. Then this problem can be tracked in time. Now I am not bothered about the problem. I am not supposed to be an IITian. I did law, am a practicing lawyer, why the hell should I be interested in your sewer. The department needs to work, NDMC, PWD, all these departments need to work. These departments need to be brought in a state that they respond automatically, where the citizen is the owner or master whereas an MLA I am a servant. So I am supposed to be doing everything within my domain to ensure that the problems get solved within time. This is what we need to ask for. We need to ask our MLAs and MPs to solve citizen’s problems as soon as possible. Citizens should not be taking rounds of the office. Infact in my office, the moment you complain, they will call you four to five times whether your problem is over or not. So the entire constituency is happy. We have to stop idolizing these politicians. This messiah structure which we have given to the politicians, somebody comes from the helicopter and comes down to address you and runs off and does not want to face media, does not want to face people or political opponents, what service will you provide? This politics, this democracy has to be a dialogue with the public and the politician. We need to be demanding that sort of accountability from the people who want to become our leaders.

SA: The direct question that you asked about competence is a rather a difficult question to answer. If you are in a business of developing telecom policy, then you must know electronics, engineering, signal processing. Then you must also know a little bit about economics, game theory because we have to design an auction that shouldn’t be gamed. So it takes a lot competence in just one area - telecom policy. Similarly, privacy, you need to understand global privacy law, you need to understand cyber security. You need to know what sociology is all about. What unintended effects your interventions would cause, so competence is a very complicating question. Building on the point which Mr. Bharti was making about accountability and transparency that is, perhaps the key. The Chief Minister of Kerela had a CCTV camera installed in his office. Unfortunately, he turned the audio off. If he had kept the audio on then we would get to know how competent he was when it came to doing the job he was doing. If you are a civil society organization in the US and you send an RTI, or Freedom of Information, request, to the parliamentarian, you can get their daily schedule for the last five years. You can find how many times they met a lobbyist from a particular corporation. It is the
higher levels of transparency for everybody including the NGOs. The trouble is some of the NGOs are puppets for the corporate agenda. They have been installed by the large corporation. So NGOs have to disclose their sources of funding, move funds that travel to these meetings or their salaries are. This is the standard that has developed in this country called the credibility alliance norm. Unless NGOs comply to those standards, we can’t even trust those NGOs. So the competence question, harder to answer, but through transparency greater accountability and because of that, whether people are competent or not will be clear and then hopefully the best people will rise to the top.

*Design Public is a high-level conversation among a select group of thinkers, decision-makers and opinion-leaders who seek to transform India into an innovation society. It brings together influential actors from all sectors of society to deliberate the best ways in which innovation can serve the public interest. The larger goal of the Conclave is to serve as an enabling platform for building the necessary partnerships and consortia that will bring this agenda to practical realization. The fifth edition of Design Public was held on the 14th of March 2014, at the Vihara Innovation Campus, New Delhi.

* This transcript has been lightly edited for grammatical errors. Some sections of the transcript have been removed to maintain the length of this section.

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**Sunil Abraham**

Sunil Abraham is the executive director of the Centre for Internet and Society (CIS), Bangalore. He is also the founder of Mahiti, a social enterprise aiming to reduce the cost and complexity of information and communication technology for the voluntary sector by using free software. For three years, Sunil also managed the International Open Source Network, a project of United Nations Development Programme’s Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme, serving 42 countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Sunil currently serves on the advisory boards of Open Society Foundations – Information Programme, Mahiti, Samvada and International Centre for Free/Open Source Software.

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**Somnath Bharti**

Somnath Bharti is an Indian lawyer who has become a politician representing the Aam Admi Party (AAP). He was elected as the AAP candidate for the Patel Nager constituency in the Delhi state assembly elections, 2013 and was Minister of Law, Tourism, Administrative Reforms, Art & Culture in the Government of Delhi. Bharti spent his childhood at Hisua Bazar in Nawada. He was educated firstly at a local school and went to Patna for intermediate education. After completing his post-graduate M.Sc. from IIT Delhi, Bharti pursued a degree in law at Delhi University.

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**Namrata Mehta**

Namrata Mehta is a Director – Innovation at the Center for Knowledge Societies, New Delhi. She has an undergraduate degree in Sociology from Delhi University, and a postgraduate diploma in Experimental Media Arts, from Srishti School of Art, Design and Technology, Bangalore. At CKS, she works closely on technology and infrastructure projects related to ‘mobilities’ in both urban and rural contexts. These range from mobile as well as telecommunication technologies, portable diagnostic devices and transport solutions. Prior to CKS, Namrata has developed games as a research tool for policy makers in the agricultural and urban infrastructure sector.
A User-Centered Approach to Public Services Delivery

Excerpts from an interview with Christian Bason

MindLab is a cross-governmental innovation unit which involves citizens and businesses in creating new solutions for society. Mindlab is part of three ministries and one municipality: the Ministry of Business and Growth, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Employment and Odense Municipality and has formed a collaboration with the Ministry for Economic Affairs and the Interior. Entrepreneurship, digital self-service, education and employment are some of the areas they address. We spoke with the head of MindLab, Christian Bason, about the role of design thinking in governance.

How has MindLab been using user-centered design to improve the delivery of public services in Denmark? What have been some the key changes that this approach has been able to bring about?

The way we have been working with user centered design has been in three major ways.

One is to explore how citizens are experiencing public services - using fieldwork and ethnographic methods - to come as close as we can to human experience of public services whether it is small and medium enterprises (SMEs) receiving business support or highly skilled foreign workers, it makes sense if it involves the wider public sectors or wider systems that is involved in the problem we are finding, so being across ministerial units but also being human-centered, we almost always involve multiple stakeholders in conversations about problems and solutions, so that is done in the field through conducting research. The second is to engage stakeholders in collaborations through workshops and by bringing multiple perspectives into the process so different departments of government, different levels of government, external stakeholders and so forth.
The third way we do it is by using design method to visualize various possible solutions. So for example, we are trying to build interactions within the public system and so forth. Much of the work that we have done is in the pretty early stage of the change process so some of the work is mainly focused on providing new insights for policy makers that then influences how they collect solutions and also ultimately what they chose to implement. So an example of generating major new insights as a deliverable from our side, has been for example working with highly qualified foreign workers experience their work in the state of Denmark, their ability to access public services, their work life, family life and so forth. I think the change or the value that we have generated comes in three clusters-

One is new insights about what categorizes the problem- be that of highly qualified workers and how they experience working and being in Denmark or whether it is a problem of what motivates and drives a micro–entrepreneur working with insights about injured workers and how they experience case to case management of a work injury process.

The second is designing organisational responses or digital responses and helping the agency come with various different ways of which they can address that problem - new organizational forms, building a citizen service centre or building a set of protocols for how they encounter case management at the citizen level.

Finally some of our work involves building quite specific working solutions or prototypes that are so concrete that they can be more or less directly implemented. So for example building a digital platform for registering a new business in Denmark, - its business code- something for which we produced a wire frame and an actual working prototype. We are also working on the inside of the government- on knowledge management systems for government official so to conclude our value of change falls in three categories (i) New perspectives, new insights about public problems held by agencies (ii) Concrete ideas, concrete concepts that are then moved forward in to the system (iii) Concrete tangible solutions – I can site an example of the business case we developed which is being implemented showed that we could make a 20 times return on investment digital solutions for businesses, so the scale in some of the changes flowing from this were significant.

That’s a really good question about top-down versus bottom-up, and I don’t think it is a neither or nor- it is at both ends. But I think the starting point from where we are placed can be different from where you are placed vis-a-vis the public sector. So we tend to see government as the owner of the problem or where the problem starts, so when we say that public managers need to be designers what we mean is that they have to take the lead in inviting in citizens and opening up policy processes much more proactively and so that does not mean that we don’t want citizens to be co-designers and partners.

I think that is totally relevant approach to helping us address the problem and if you are interested in creating more citizen engagement in a broad scale and opening up for mass collaboration– then digital platforms are critical in that context but it also puts a lot of pressure on the system to respond to the ideas and suggestions or concerns voiced by citizens. You have to be a bit careful in setting expectations you can’t live up to. You also have to be aware that the kind of information you are getting from that kind of platform are
articulations or solutions or ideas- but it might not help you understand the underlying behaviours or needs or challenges that are the reasons why people are coming to you for solutions. I would say that crowd platforms and digital platforms have their place and relevance depending on what you want to do. In our work what we want to do and the way we add value is by providing policy makers with deep qualitative, rich details about what is going on with people and with that kind of detail and that kind of insight, it is also about empathy and putting yourself in citizen's shoes- I am not so sure that the digital platforms are most suited for that purpose- so it depends on what you want to do.

I would say that it is quite easy to build a crowd platform for getting immediate citizen inputs on ideas and suggestions. It is cheap and easy, but it comes with risk of building false expectations if you can't live up to answering all the questions and ideas that are coming in. It is much easier to co-create or co-design something that you might call service design- a clear picture of who are the users or the citizens engaged, are relatively easier to measure outcomes. That’s easier to do and more directly applicable for these public services. There is something else which I would call policy design, which is much more strategic, maybe a bit more abstract, but also cost cutting issues that are characterized as complex problems. I would say that the methods and tools that we use are very well suited to address this.

The most responsive type of class of public services is a single service delivery, to a very specified target group, that is quite easy to engage with that it is quite easy to use co-design methods with. I’d say the problem types that are, highly complex, highly abstract, multiple stakeholder- you also need these processes but they are less responsive because it is harder to move the system.

What do the line managers, and the public managers and the staff to engage? One end, it should require any competency because they are busy enough on their day jobs- they have a job to do and it is a process of working, where they are enabled to work with processes like these, access to new knowledge and ways where they are being helped to discover ways of changing how they work- that been said- those who have tried it before, and are used to this way, are easier to work with. The transaction costs are lower with people who have worked with it before and are more comfortable with it - because it can be a pretty challenging process.

Then there is something about attitude- those design attitude of public managers- And I would say that mind-sets, culture, attitude does matter in terms of in terms of how you engage with this process. - in some cases people just can’t engage, because this is all ultimately about changing society out there, changing outcomes in society, and if you are not interested at all- then there is no motivation- no energy or direction and then one shouldn’t probably try to do it. I don’t think that you have put people to school to learn how to co-design and that goes for the public managers because what they bring to the process, to the table is their core work, their core skills and their core function. Similarly, citizens do what they do and when we do field work and do interviews, we don’t educate them, we just explore what they are doing in their lives. How they are experiencing public services. When we bring them into workshops- we bring them in as they are. We may clarify expectations, help them understand what’s going to happen but it is about not changing who they are but tapping into their worlds - tapping into their contribution.

The way we go to citizens is in two ways:
First is fieldwork, exploring their world and the professional empathy in getting insight into what’s going on from their perspective and the other one is to test and try out new possible solutions, new futures, together with them- so these are the main places we go and there are no special skills required for that at all. We don’t tend to engage citizens in the creative processes, - workshops or idea generation- at that stage it might be more difficult to get value from it-but that is a question of philosophy a little bit of how we do that.

I think there are two things we are missing- if we have become too digitally enabled in the public sector. The first one is, to remember the human aspect and find ways of getting that into the system because that is also what motivates, public staff and managers to change something- if they can see who this is really about, and it makes the citizen or user into a human being.

Second, Is the public sector system itself- what are you doing in ways where the solutions and the approaches and the avenues have a consequence with the way the public service works and that means how is the role and work of a public servant going to change?

What are the consequences for governing, what are the different work processes that we need to put in place, -what are the digital tools we are using, what are the new skills and competencies we should have. So how does the insights and ideas that we created matter for public managers and what are they going to do differently. Impact - that is the key role of a governance lab, and it should take it seriously. - It does not mean that you cannot find powerful solutions that are built outside government that are not governmental or civic institutions- sometimes that might be the most effective approach in countries with weak public institutions or dysfunctional ones, with vested interests where you can’t change anything - that does not mean the countries with developing areas only- it also means countries like Australia. Ultimately, I believe we have to go to the core of public sector, so the answer is governance labs need to engage the public service sector itself.

Christian Bason

Christian Bason has been head of MindLab since 2007. Prior to joining MindLab, Christian led the public organisation and management practice of Ramboll, a consultancy. Christian is passionate about transforming the public sector’s ability to better meet the needs of citizens and society. Christian has presented to and advised a wide range of governments around the world on innovation in the public sector, and is a member of a number of advisory boards in Denmark and internationally.
An Introduction to Open Tech Movement

Excerpts from an interview with Sumandro Chattapadhyay

Tell us a little bit about your interest, experience and relationship to open data, with reference to your work at Sarai, MOD, HasGeek and Data Meet?

My first engagement with open data happened through trying to work with national scale government data, from agencies like National Sample Survey Office, the census of India, District Information System for Education and NCRB data set, as part of my work with the Azim Premji University and MOD institute. It is not easy to work with government data. You need technical and emotional help. Emotional help to sustain the long hours of difficulty of cleaning the data. And that led to my engagement with Data Meet, which was also happening right at the same time.

There are three ways in which I am interested in data. One is a very practical engagement with data, making it helpful in an insightful manner using graphics- diagrams and charts - doing analysis. The second is looking at how data, more specifically digital data has come into sphere of governance in the country. The third is kind of political engagement with free software, open access and the problem of data.

Could you give us a brief history of the open data movement? When did it begin? Who were some of its early proponents? What were some of its theoretical underpinnings? What have been some of the key milestones of the movements?

The open data movement started somewhere around 2007, both in the US, led by Carl Malamud and Tim O’Reilly and the UK, led by Tim Berners Lee and Nigel Shadbolt. In both the cases there were two kinds of concerns that were coming together. The first concern, for accountability, —after the financial troubles there were questions about how government knows stuff [and] why don’t they allow us to take a look at the same data. The second concern was that...
now it is the time when economic roots have boosted—why not give out the data—allow developers and companies to create product and services using the data since the government is not creating the data—these things concerned.

Both these groups, Tim Berners in UK and Tim O Reilly in US formulated both technical and minimum level of appropriateness that would define what open data is or what openness is in terms of data. In case of the UK— they had a very strong relationship with the government. Of Course Barack Obama is the first one who sent across this memo for open governance at large and open data was one part really got acted upon much quickly than the other aspect of open governance. So of course CTO Aneesh Chopra played a critical role in institutionalizing this open data within the government system in US. He created the team of data.gov. Around the same time, in late 2007 or early 2008, Obama visits India— Aneesh is travelling as well— there is a meeting in Mumbai and there are questions regarding “can we cooperate/ collaborate on the across this memo for open governance at large and open data was one part really got acted upon much quickly than the other aspect of open governance. So of course CTO Aneesh Chopra played a critical role in institutionalizing this open data within the government system in US. He created the team of data.gov. Around the same time, in late 2007 or early 2008, Obama visits India— Aneesh is travelling as well— there is a meeting in Mumbai and there are questions regarding “can we cooperate/ collaborate on the across this memo for open governance at large and open data was one part really got acted upon much quickly than the other aspect of open governance. So of course CTO Aneesh Chopra played a critical role in institutionalizing this open data within the government system in US. He created the team of data.gov. Around the same time, in late 2007 or early 2008, Obama visits India— Aneesh is travelling as well— there is a meeting in Mumbai and there are questions regarding “can we cooperate/ collaborate on the across this memo for open governance at large and open data was one part really got acted upon much quickly than the other aspect of open governance. So of course CTO Aneesh Chopra played a critical role in institutionalizing this open data within the government system in US. He created the team of data.gov. Around the same time, in late 2007 or early 2008, Obama visits India— Aneesh is travelling as well— there is a meeting in Mumbai and there are questions regarding “can we cooperate/ collaborate on the across this memo for open governance at large and open data was one part really got acted upon much quickly than the other aspect of open governance. So of course CTO Aneesh Chopra played a critical role in institutionalizing this open data within the government system in US. He created the team of data.gov. Around the same time, in late 2007 or early 2008, Obama visits India— Aneesh is travelling as well— there is a meeting in Mumbai and there are questions regarding “can we cooperate/ collaborate on the
Firstly, it has a policy unlike the US and the UK, where you don’t have a policy, [but] when you have a very organized system of data recording within the government then once you take the decision to start sharing the part of data with the citizens— it’s rather easy to come up with a good quality data structure— which is definitely not the case in India. The problem in India is in many cases there will be holes in data and there would not be good data, but the government can’t do anything right now as they have other things to do. Data is not a product that you create at the end of your work. Data is a process, it’s about how you document your work, how you use the process data to better your processes.

So the thing is that unless data is part of how the government functions at a day-to-day basis and across a period— because in many cases— data is something that lower level government agency will give to a higher level government so as to ensure flow of money from high level government agency to a low level government agency— so it is kind of a proof of spending in many cases— and in that model what happens is the higher government agency— all it cares is about rows and the columns that have been filled up— they don’t care about how those rows and columns have been filled up and the lower level government agency doesn’t actually use the data to better their service delivery in any case— so these kind of structure issues really hamper the quality of data in India and not so much of its legal and official value. So, I think in terms of how it deals with openness is pretty fine— the problem is elsewhere— it is how data at large plays a role in governance in India.

So often, open data has been criticized for being an elitist way of doing accountability. You need a kind of sub layer of organizations which work both with issues and with data and have the capabilities to bring these things together. We do have some in India, you have organizations working with water data, environment, urban data, financial data - but it is not right to say that these organization will have the skills to work with a lot of data. Many of these organizations largely still work with excel and excel is often not the most capable tool to work with several kind of data and more importantly work with several kind of data, data formats and data practices that get celebrated by the open data community. The open data community in India is a developer driven community as opposed to accountability activism driven communication like in the case of RTI and that definitely sets the tone of what kind of technological language comfort is required to belong to the community. All kind of work requires skills and so does working with data and most kind of large things require coming together of people with different kinds of skills and so would any work that will require doing things with data. Of course you need a technological environment that is true, why it gets talked about much is because there are not many people who can do it yet, in India. I think of that as a short term problem.

Open data prioritizes digital data, because there are things that you can do with digital data that can’t do with manual data. Also we are producing a lot of digital data already [The] National E-governance plan started in 2006 and there have been efforts across ministries to use MIS software to track government activities at the lowest possible level. The entire thing of Aadhar is not really about identity, [but] unique identity. The difference is that it is about having a number for each person so that you can find this person across databases. What Aadhar is trying to do is to overcome a difficulty where you have too many scheme specific databases, fund dispersal, expenditure reports. It is true that we are not there yet but then we are not even harvesting the amount of digital data that has already been created in the country— either. We have some amount of opportunity to grab on to.
How is data collected technically?

There are really two ways—either mediated by the human beings or not mediated by the human being. So, one is machine collected data automatically, all kinds of real-time data collection that really goes around sensor collected data—because human collected data cannot be real-time.

But largely how data is collected in India, is there is a person who compiles the data either at the end of the day or week or month and that travels through various stages of government ministries and then gets published on the data portals. What happens in the Mandi Price App is that the data is fed at the mandi level across all the mandis across India. The same software ensures that a copy of it goes to all relevant agencies.

What are the uses of open data?

The successful examples are difficult to cite.

There have been studies that speculate financial and social impact of open data—but I think it is yet to be documented sufficiently. BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) is a good example—they started sharing bus arrivals/vehicle arrival information over a real-time API and people can use the API to create apps that tell people waiting for this vehicle that this is how much time you have to wait for the vehicle or at the station you are in—so that has been one type of success instance. The question is, would it be cheaper for the government to just produce this app instead of creating an entire infrastructure of publishing this data?

For most national-level datasets, it is not very easily possible to commercially use them. If you have more granular data, then it’s possible to commercially use them, to do things from market research to kind of consumption decision support apps. If you have to tell a farmer in your area that these are the three mandis in your area, this is how much they are paying for the product and you can go here for this much price, that is one kind of thing.

So in terms of advocacy and accountability, you can use it to see whether government did any miscalculation. You know the numbers and you can come up with another set of data and compare whether the government sense of the reality is matching with the reality that you are seeing. I think that is a very valuable part of open data when it comes to accountability—transparency stuff.

For commercial use, the problem is [whether] the published government data is useable for commercial
purpose, because that doesn’t automatically happen, that has to be pushed for as well.

I don’t think so, I think government right now doesn’t address the demand side well enough. For example the infamous data set published by the New York city was the data of all the trees in NYC– some people created beautiful maps of these but what use is that? There is a lot of work being done by Sunlight Foundation in the US– they are into accountability activism and advocacy, same in the UK by OKF. One of the routes the open data activists have chosen, worldwide is to say that this data has been collected using the taxes so it is our right to access the data. The other way to go about is to use this open data discussion to tell the government that see you can do so many things better only if you are paying attention to your own data.

One way of the approaching problem is to speak to people who are trying to deal with these problems and ask if there are any data needs that need to be satisfied. I don’t think it will be easy for many of them to answer that or for them to articulate the problems they have in terms of data problems. In that case you talk through the problem they already face and see if any of the problems can be satisfied with data. It’s clever because you are working with people who are already in the field and at least you have materialistic questions to set data against. Another thing you can do is to speak to the government and see why they can’t do certain things- my hunch is that they can’t do certain things because they can’t track those things, they don’t know where the trouble is so they can’t locate it on the map or know its whereabouts.

So do you think that there is a conscious effort to not publish the commercially usable data?

What kind of challenges do you think open data solutions serve best?

Are there specific categories of challenges that can be addressed through open data solutions?

On the one hand we’ve heard time and again, that the government doesn’t have data, and is thirsty for it. On the other hand, where data is available it is often badly maintained and incomplete. What has been your experience with this?

Third problem is that the data that has been published is not documented well enough. You don’t know what the column means, how the data for each column has been collected, [or] what assumptions have gone into collecting the data.

Nobody is. Government needs to collect data so that it is sent to the funding commission to sanction the funds but truly the municipality doesn’t need the data for their own consumption at all. So the consultant who creates the report or proposal keeps the data as well. So the data never really enters the government’s sphere at all. That kind of need for the self consumption of data is also critical for the production of data.

I don’t think that it is the right question to ask the data. At least you have something from the government that is the truth to the government. Now you use the data to challenge the truth of the
government if you can or find the nuances of the data that the government is putting up. Using only government data you can only see patterns which tell you that there must be something happening here. Then if you take government data and non-government data and put them together that gives a better handle to questions like is the data authentic or is it showing the right reality or not?

What are the potential impacts of open data?

The need to publish open data pushes back into the existing ways of production and management of data within the government and kind of makes it well oiled. The fact that other people are also collecting and sharing the data publically may push the government to produce data that they are not producing already.

Sumandro Chattapadhyay

Sumandro Chattapadhyay is a researcher interested in history and politics of informatics in India, media and technology studies, and political economy. He is associated with The Sarai Programme at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, and ‘Exploring the Emerging Impacts of Open Data in Developing Countries’ project at HasGeek Media LLP.
Communication for Social Change

A transcript of a keynote address by Esko Kilpi at Design Public 5

I would like to start by three short quotes. One from Abraham Lincoln, one from Amartya Sen and the third by Dieter Rams - Abraham Lincoln said that the role of government is to do things for the people that the people themselves can’t do. Now what Amartya Sen said was a very important principle about wealth. He wrote that wealth is not something that you have. It is something you do. It is our capacity to do things. Now how can that be combined with the famous design chief and designer Dieter Rams. Dieter Rams said that a good design is as little design as possible.

So how can these three gentlemen be combined in a short narrative that would make sense in this gathering? I think the most important challenge, design wise, is to be able to improve the capacity of citizens. So the basic thing may not be about the relationship with the government and citizens but our capacity to innovate and our capacity to improve. But the researchers of creativity and innovation lately claim that the ideas are not independent. Ideas are about new connections. A new idea is a connection that wasn’t put up there before. And now what this might mean for us perhaps is that can we enhance the capacity of people to do things by creating new opportunities through new connections.

So what I am suggesting through this very short keynote is that the most important thing is trying to enable people to connect in new ways. And we do have two
archetypical connection systems for this—one is the idea of wiki and other one is the idea of Twitter. Why I am suggesting the importance of these two platforms is because it insures design. The idea will always of course be from Dieter Rams’ idea that is to make sure that everybody is part of the ideation. Everyone is part of the continuous development so nothing can be designed as something that is ready from the very beginning. So everything needs to be able to iterate to develop and do that in a collaborative way.

Now thinking about the capacity to do things in a new way is really a part of all relationships between teachers and learners. It is about the idea of management, managers and subordinates. The industrial era was about building things and as I suggest that the post industrial era is about connecting things. And the connection between learners and teachers, managers and subordinates, I claim is very different today. In old times, it was the teachers who knew everything and gave standard answers to students and it was the managers that chose their subordinates. At the moment, we are in a highly contextual era, which means that all answers and all needs are also contextual. In fact this means that all relationships between teachers and students can be based not on the ideas of the teachers but the needs of the students. And this is where I come to Twitter. Twitter to me is by far the most important information delivery network in the world because it allows the learners to choose their teachers—the subordinates—the followers, in a way, to choose their leaders and it allows you to do it in a highly contextual way.

So design-wise I think the most important thing is to start planning by involving active citizens and make possible that there are new ways of participation and communication—and to me all social change is about new ways of communication.

*This transcript has been lightly edited for grammatical errors. Portions of the transcript have been removed to maintain the length of this section.*

**Esko Kilpi**

Esko Kilpi is the founder and principal of Esko Kilpi Ltd, a leading research and consultancy firm working with the challenges of Internet-based business models, digital work and complex work environments. Esko takes part in research and lectures on the topics of interactive, iterative value creation, complexity, knowledge based view of the firm and social business technologies. He has been a member of an expert think tank on Knowledge Management for the European Union. He is a founding member of the Entovation Group in the United States. Entovation is a global network of leading knowledge work experts.
Development to Social Innovation

A transcript of a keynote address by Arndt Hussar at Design Public 5*

Governance is really a retractable problem. Poverty, climate change, migration—all of these things that government has to deal with—and on top of that, we have all these stakeholders and complex relationships. For the past decade we have really witnessed a paradigm shift, a big change. We’ve witnessed it in countries like Egypt and Indonesia, but also recently in India. On top of that you see massive innovation that not only requires, but also enables, the updating of rules of engagement. We need to reengineer our processes for greater accountability and we need to upgrade our institutions towards greater capacity. This all is based on demand—a demand for better balancing of short term goals like ‘I need my water today’ and the long term goals like sustainable solutions. We need to balance the diverse needs and interests of people. We need to assess, verify and then also articulate our options. We need to be very sincere about the options we have. People need to get their entitlements and people need to be reached by policies. We need to find open, transparent, inclusive and collaborative ways of working together.
UNDP, as the government network for the UN, is pretty much a newcomer to the design thinking field and to social innovation but many of us ask, ‘Have we been doing it all along?’ I don’t quite think so. It really requires a change in our old ways of thinking and old ways of doing—meaning, just as an example, less thinking about ‘target groups’ and more about users and moving from piloting—where you come with a design of a programme and you run it at large scale and pilot, to more prototyping, small scale, rapid prototyping—these are the things we can learn.

The other thing that development organizations have started learning is about openness—from more closed shop type of work together with governments, to greater data sharing and so on and so forth. In fact, UNDP places first among multilateral agencies on the Aid Transparency Index, which we are very proud of. So opening up that data, that the World Bank has also done, is really quite important.

We at UNDP have decided to go really big on innovation. Now, that means we want to see that in the institutions that we work with— but also in our own organization. The main reason is that we have to realize that we, by ourselves, don’t really have the best possible solution—we need to open up. This is not just happening in development organizations but also in governance around the world.

We think those are really cutting edge ideas that can help openness, inclusivity, flexibility, the effectiveness and efficiency of institutions. Institutions are key—they organize how our society works. That doesn’t mean just department ‘X’—institutions go beyond that, like civil society institutions and so forth. But we have to be inclusive, flexible, effective, and efficient, and innovation is the way to get there. This will raise the legitimacy of government and government institutions. It will also raise the trust that people have in their government. We need to expand that solution space. And solution space, what that includes, is not just really tech tools—it goes way beyond that. I think designers talk about service design—so public service innovation is one of the key areas that we need to get into more deeply, and part is policy innovation.

There is also a greater need to engage and that will be possible especially through greater monitoring of accountability—enabled by things like big data, by social media, by suggestions to government. Mobile technology allows us to communicate and instantly access services that provide feedback. And big data really allows us to drill into the underbelly of governance—developing new services and discovering insights that can better inform policy.

For us, it is the understanding that it is the old lady that takes the bus every morning— who is the expert that we need to engage with. She knows best what the problem is with the service. So engaging citizen experts is a huge jump for a public servant, but it’s one that has to be made. It is a mindset change. And this really what I think it takes to create the world we want.

*This transcript has been lightly edited for grammatical errors. Portions of the transcript have been removed to maintain the length of this section.

Arndt Husar is a Policy Specialist in the UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence (Singapore). He leads its work on Public Service Innovation and has been closely following SICA 2013 as a key partner and judge at several SICs. The Global Centre’s interest in social innovation reflects the widespread realization in the public sector that breakthrough development solutions often spring from co-creation and partnership with citizen experts. Governments across the globe are opening up public data and become more open to co-design of delivery and policy solutions. Arndt previously worked with UNDP in India and in the Asia-Pacific Regional Centre with a focus on governance, leadership and urbanisation processes.
The Elements of Governance Innovation

A transcript of a panel discussion at Design Public 5*

How are people around the world thinking about Governance Innovation in terms of process, data and systems change? Arndt Husar, Esko Kilpi, Namrata Mehta, Ramanjit Chima and Sumandro Chattapadhyay discuss the culture of openness, start-up ecologies, scaling solutions, leadership and lab models of governance innovation in a panel moderated by Divya Datta.

Divya Datta: We’ve discussed the dysfunctional government systems that sometimes we’re working with. We’ve also discussed potential and unintended impacts of open data and technology. I think in this conversation we’d like to focus on how people are thinking about governance innovation around the world, in terms of changes that need to be made in cultures, in processes, systems, in
data, in policies, and then anchor the conversation back to the Indian context, and see what is required for governance innovation in India. So to start with, one open question to the entire panel. We at CKS want to take advantage of the possibilities of open data, of technology, and of a very willing and networked citizenry for governance innovation. How do we make the change happen?

**Ramanjit Chima:** I think what’s interesting in open data efforts in India is that there is a lot of interest in it, and a lot of work is being done and that is something that a lot of people don’t realize. But if you look at the actual application or use of it, that’s where there are challenges to encounter. There is a sense of dissatisfaction both in terms of people who are developing things and those who want solutions. I remember, around three years ago, David Cameron was making his first trip to India. As many of you know, David Cameron has formed a fairly interesting agenda with regards to digital engagement and open data, in many ways inspired by what Obama did. I remember they were visiting various places and his team was also visiting the Google campus in Bangalore. They thought they would literally come, and they actually apologized for the colonial mindset they said they had, and teach people how to ‘do open data’. They realized that lots of people are already doing great things in India. The challenges that they encountered were a lot of things that aren’t being done. If there is government data it is not being made open, or if it is being made open there are challenges in sourcing it. Since then, I’ve seen a lot of interesting applications and a lot of great work happening but very few of these applications actually tend to be used or get incorporated directly into governance per se. Sometimes that is an institutional problem. We’re seeing great start-ups taking place but often these start-ups are not actually organically germinating from government institutions, or governance institutions that are not directly related to government. You see a lot of APPs coming up with very few downloads and examples of use. Often those who are developing applications don’t necessarily know the institutional structure in which governments operate. There are really no costs in people looking at an APP, but there are costs in using that APP and implement it. These are more the broader problems that people encounter, and there are possible solutions for that, but I think what is interesting is that we’re seeing a flowering of this. For example, India has more data sets than many other examples in many other countries in the region. But again, could those data sets be better? Do other agencies need to work better with data.gov.in? Do we need to get better mandates? These are questions I want to open here, perhaps for later on in the discussion.

**Esko Kilpi:** We have to know two fairly important principles. The first one being that if something is not open it is closed, and isolated. If it isolated it very soon becomes irrelevant and dies. Only open things can be the way forward. Therefore, transparency has to be the default if we want to improve something. The second principle is as important, and it is the great need to scale things up. The great need to scale good things up. That means that all things have a software element to them. All things are software things. So coding is part of everything we do. Coding is part of all design. Design without coding can’t scale up the way we see it. Therefore, it is kind of a learning process. First you learn to read and write, and the next thing is to learn to code.

**Arndt Husar:** I like a few ideas that have come up. One is the ‘let many flowers bloom’ aspect of innovation. I think that’s immensely important to keep the momentum going. But yes, at some point one has to pick the winners and that’s where I think the institutions come in, one being government and one being civil societies. Picking those good ideas, refining them, prototyping them to an extent that they really work. That means engagement with the parties that you want to make more transparent. It’s not enough to say ‘I am going to tackle corruption’ and then talk to the people that are involved in it. Instinctively, most people who are in government want to do good – most people. So you’ll find people to talk to that will tell you, ‘okay here are the practices around me. I am an open book. Ask me.’ Ipaidabribe.com was one example where a lot of government officials came up and gave advice. So I think looking out there for those good solutions is partly the job of civil societies, but also partly the job of government and they will have the scale that it takes to make the solution really happen. That’s why institutions are an important factor of innovation.
DD: So perhaps you’d like to talk about models in other countries that have worked better with open data with citizen’s responding to that open data or decision making being around that open data, and how is that curated? What kind of resources and expertise should we in India be curating? How should we be thinking about this in order to be more responsive to emerging public needs?

Namrata Mehta: Well, maybe I don’t want to talk so much about the model – so I think we’ve talked about open data sets, but we’ve not really understood the other side of things, which is user generated content or crowd-sourcing. I want to use an example that’s actually from outside everything we’ve discussed this morning which is e-commerce platforms or online classifieds - where what you’re really doing is creating markets of people who are buying and selling but really it’s in that creation of a platform that allows people that want something, to come together and exchange, where you’re really making change happen. For example, we’re thinking about what makes a good salesman, how can we convert everyday people into good salesman and once that happens, would they in turn convert people into good buyers where people aren’t negotiating or getting annoyed by how much they need to pay for something they want? I guess what I’m interested in, or what we need to think about is not just open data sets, but how do you actually get people to change behavior over time by facilitating ways in which they are exchanging information that is open and mutual beneficial. I really like this idea from the morning that came up that has to do with the skills and competencies you need in order to give back to a certain kind of system you are a part of.

RC: Just to add to that. It’s not just about open data sets, it’s about openness per say. That’s what you see in fact, in other governments that have been very successful in this, is that the work they’re putting in is part of the larger openness agenda. For example, you can point out many things in the Obama administration, many elements of both openness and open data per say, but they pitched it from the beginning as an openness platform. The first document that Obama signed was a memo on government openness and transparency, saying essentially that unless there’s reason for keeping things classified, they should be released. The context of what we now know the Obama administration to be and the many criticisms you might make of that, but the point is that they said categorically that this is not open data but openness per se. The reason why that is important for government is that open data is just one piece of it. When you start using it, or you want to use the results of open data, you then need to have a culture of openness in order to actually make things work.

I wanted to add a few things to what Namrata was saying – essentially there are three elements. One is about culture, the other is the environment to make things possible, the regulatory environment, to not hold people back, and lastly is administration. I’ll give you anecdotes for each.

Culture is a real challenge sometimes and this is actually a case for government. People forget that government is very difficult – the number of things that are coming there, limited resources, and nearly everyone is after you. The challenge that very often comes from startup cultures and e-commerce and others is the
idea that you are fundamentally open to lots of different things coming to you, and you need to take a certain amount of chaos. For example, crisis response is a fundamental element that each government is concerned by. They are worried for disasters, they are worried for things placed there and the one thing that tech centers contributed a lot to recently is the idea that you can use the instantaneous publication abilities of the Internet to make information available. An example of this is a product part of the Google Crisis Response Scheme, called Person Finder. This was launched after the natural disasters in Japan and the idea was that people could go online and post a missing link – ‘x family member is missing, somebody I know is missing’ and people in turn could say I know information about them. For most people in the tech community it is a no-brainer – this is exactly what we would like to do, this is the power of the web. People in disaster response say how do we verify this information is correct? They had worries about the possibilities of rumor. These are all genuine concerns that came up in Japan. Japanese authorities, who have a traditional use of technology but are using it in a slightly more controlled and regulated way, were actually a bit worried about it. In the end, the interesting thing is, they adopted it and embraced it. They said we are seeing the self-helping ability of the web, we see crowdsourcing wisdom. In cases of false information, they are finding administrative agencies themselves going online and correcting information or posting updates. They find it easier to use. So it is about a culture.

The second point can be seen in e-commerce platforms and this is something we’ve seen in many places, working at Google, is that it’s the same environment. If, for example, people can’t scale and they are trying to do good things with openness and open data, they will be held back. For example, many people who work with open data find out the challenge they face is when they create a scalable app and try to get funding or grants for it, people ask them, ‘Is this legally kosher?’. Most of them have to point out that technically speaking, in India, government works under a copyright – they don’t know whether, legally speaking, they can do that. They are in a gray zone. Agencies sometimes tell them go and do this, but when they actually want to go ahead there are lots of legacy legal instruments that they need to deal with. In other places, this is also part of the openness agenda, for example, the Obama administration, clarified this. The UK has spent a lot of time, statutorily clarifying it by means of resolutions. These are the simple legacy things that we sometimes forget. They’re the dull boring things lawyers would look at but they are also critical tools.

This brings me to my last point of administration – sometimes you need this to be top-down direction. The reason is because government is ultimately the reality – government is top-down as it works in creating some structure in how the apparatus works. They need to be told ‘this is what you can do, this is what you can’t’. For example, in terms of open data the most important thing in India is not data sets, but it’s actually what the cabinet secretariat mandate on all this procedure says because until people know that they can verify this, or that they are free to do this, civil servants cannot do this. So three elements – it’s about cultures, it’s about administrative direction and it’s about the regulatory environment.

Sumandro Chattapadhyay: Just to continue with Raman’s point about openness as a larger agenda – absolutely. It’s great that we are talking about data, and I’m personally very passionate about open data, but data is really one element of governance innovation. I’d like to flag four ways in which data works within the idea of governance innovation. One is data for government’s own sake – so government producing data to be used within the government. The second is government using data to open up government processes to be seen from outside. This is what the open data agenda largely does. If someone is interested in collaborating with the government, it is important for this other person sitting outside the government, to know what the government is doing, on which they will do whatever, and that’s what open data does. The third thing is the reactive disposition part. Where governments may not be very comfortable, it gives the citizens to run after somebody and ask for a particular set of information. So it kind of encourages transparency and accountability like the RTI. The fourth part really, is something that we discussed in our meetings before Design Public that is
how to ensure that government is not the only one who is producing information or data. How do we ensure that data that is produced or collated elsewhere, can also enter government and influence governance initiatives?

So one idea I find very crucial in trying to understand what open government and what governance innovation means is Tim O’Rielly’s idea of government as a platform – which has its problem. The main problem being that with governments trying to behave like platforms what has happened in the past is that platforms went ahead and behaved like governments. So you have this platform and they want to keep certain information to themselves, and they have good reason for that as well because that’s really the surplus that they generate and it’s important for them to hold them back because they make money. Importantly what happens is, when a platform is allowing certain things to exist, certain things to take place, which we expect the government to do, it will create a platform or a context, and of course certain infrastructural support for that, so that many people can come together and build things together. The problem is because of the fact that it is giving this platform like service, the platform ends up generating and collecting a lot of process information which is crucial to give these services through the platform, once other people use it. So if the government creates such platforms and keeps information to themselves, then clearly the platform would never have been successful. It has to give out process information of using these services as well. This is sort of a critique of how social media platforms around the world are performing. And also a flag, if the government is really keen to follow the same model. Tim O’Rielly’s more recent idea is that people should be creating more value than they are capturing, which I think is a very crucial idea, in this moment of how internet business operates. If we were to use similar technological imaginations to reach the government, it’s perhaps the most important thing to keep in mind.

**EK:** You have to remember that information is always power. I once studied a lot about the history of the parliamentary system, the history of governance and in Finland the logic of the whole thing is that government needs to deal with extremely complex and hard things. This means that, by definition, that you can’t inform everybody about the complexities. So let’s take representatives of the people and let’s make sure that they are well informed to make the right decisions. Now this kind of a representative democracy is increasingly not able to solve the problems we face. One of the problems here is the mental mindset we have about pyramids and hierarchies. Whenever you find a pyramid or a hierarchy you find problems because that is a way to understand things by far too slow, and rigid and power hungry a way. Now if you have a network with a corrupt node, or a corrupt server, the system goes around that node – and that should be our mindset. We should understand things as networks and specifically understand the importance of transparency as a basic requirement for any development.

**AH:** I like this point of a network and you were asking for examples, international examples, for functioning systems where innovation is coming out. I actually see that those examples are not just networks but they are networks with very good leadership. They have a pyramid again, but may be in a good way. You do need leadership to make systems work.

**EK:** There are no good pyramids.

**AH:** Okay fine. They stood for a long time though, in Egypt. In Korea, there’s a mayor in Seoul who’s really managed to set up an ecosystem. Maybe we should think of it as a network of systems that is organic. He set it up by really flipping around what public administration was doing and that’s a huge cultural challenge. It’s said that Koreans are not exactly a culture where trust is widespread – there is a lot of mistrust. Through leadership and direction he was able to bring people around the table and say, ‘Well, we’re going to have to keep some things outside this store. We are going to have to decide to collaborate and co-design better ways.’ So, yes, bringing all these people around the table, who were before not reaching and talking to each other, required this initial spark and throughout this system working it needed this guy constantly being on the backs of his civil servants to say, ‘listen if you make a mistake, I am going to back you. But please take that risk. Please go and live in that empty housing block’ – that he wasn’t able to sell for years and the government was losing money – ‘Take your own teams, stay there for a week, leave all your other work and see what’s the problem.’ So, change of mindsets requires leadership. Now, this also poses a challenge – there will be election and maybe this guy won’t be elected again, but there is a limit to getting re-elected. So we need fresh leadership to come up - the type of leadership that might change this top down nature of government and really rope in all the contributing, positive forces.

**DD:** I definitely want to come back to the entire design of a civic innovation platform that most of you have reflected in your conversations. But I just want to ask you, Arndt, you have experience in dealing with multiple governments in the past, as UNDP including India. You mentioned to me yesterday that the UNDP’s work is many times a mirror of the personality of the government itself. So how is it that you either leverage that or traverse that to push the idea of governance innovation, as a donor?
**AH:** It’s in a way the same dilemma that all government labs are facing, that have been set up. There are labs in Denmark, and France, and Canada and so on and so forth. The Director of one of the oldest labs in Denmark said he is basically a spine in the body of his own donor host. He is part of the government, but he has to be disruptive inside the government. In a way, UNDP is always aligned with government because we are a multi-government body. We consist of many governments – so we have to be working with them, in tandem. If we want to get in to real innovation then we need to disrupt what they’re doing and this is the process that makes people working with UNDP be very diplomatic and at the same time smuggling a lot of things that people may not have picked up otherwise. It’s a gradual process of convincing people and testing people and that’s why I think prototyping is so useful to us. We haven’t been consciously prototyping but as long as we can bring our partners on board with it, we can work things out and test things out. We need to be more iterative instead of coming up with a big bang idea that people would be very hesitant to try out. They don’t want to take risks – even with UNDP on the side they don’t want to go big immediately. That’s why design thinking as an approach is useful.

**DD:** I believe somebody mentioned that governments deal with complex amount of information and it’s not very easy to translate that information. But, when you talk about a culture of openness, it becomes essential to translate, at least, information public challenges and opportunities that many people can apply their minds to. Can you possibly talk a little bit about the design of information when you talk about open data? What kind of information needs to be put out? How it needs to be designed?

**EK:** Life is all about people trying to achieve things together. There are different mindsets of what are efficient ways to do things together. One of the most harming ways to do things, and think about things, is the reductionist approach that we are used to – meaning this is what you do, and so I am not a part of it. We try to divide the world in to functions and things that don’t discuss with one another, and this is the biggest problem with governance systems in the world, and I guess also in India. Now, the situation today is that all things are linked and all things are connected. This is also a great opportunity for us to be able to design in this domain that links to problems, and brings it into information, design wise. It brings it into the possibilities for people to take part in taking responsibility, take part in improving and commenting and contributing to the problems that we face. Now, we don’t have this sort of system, so to me this is the second biggest opportunity for India. If you’re online population is about 10% bigger, that’s a fantastic opportunity. So change in government is really changing what happens within the citizenship. It’s not inside the government. It is changing the way we see problems and changing the way we try and solve problems.

**DD:** Esko, You’ve also mentioned in your past conversations that there’s a lot of potential in civic innovation apps. There’s tremendous potential in even developing a model around creating multiple civic innovation apps. What kind of future do you see there and how is it that we can push that ecosystem in India?
are very few things we do about this. For example, governments very often, use YouTube quite effectively. I’m sure my sales team won’t like me saying this, but I think what’s more interesting is what Twitter does, but they look at a range of things. If people want to know what conversation is happening, they look at Twitter. They know that Twitter is not necessarily representative of the views of the population as a whole, but it might represent the views of the news reading or rather news producing population. But I think the bigger question is, ‘how do you make stuff possible?’ What we often provide from our space is just a platform. For example, the Google Play Store is a platform. You can host apps there, you can download them, if you want to make money there’s a way to make money of it, but otherwise you can just access it. We noticed that not too many civic engagement apps have high download rates. The ones that are there are ones that people have, I think, made effort to create. All these traditional, classic business development things, that even government does, are things that people in civic engagement space tend to forget. One of the best examples of an app I’ve seen recently that’s available on Android, is the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), Election Watch Reporter. It’s actually very simple. It’s a skeleton app, but other parts of it are innovative. What’s innovative is that it adapts to Indian needs – it’s low bandwidth, and it’s easily available. What’s more interesting is the development of it. It was developed by the end of last year, the ADR waited till mid February for their national conference, where one of the election commissioners was visiting, and formally unveiled it. Why? Because they saw this not as a challenge to existing institutions, but as a way to partner with them. So now the Election Commission of India sees this as one more tool they can use, and for example they admitted that they want to make more of their information available online because they realize our capacities are limited.

**DD:** Just as a closing Namrata, can you talk a bit about what it is that we are trying to attempt with the Bihar Innovation Lab. What learnings from there are salient to an urban, or a civic innovation lab where open data may really help. Maybe Namrata, Arndt and Esko can also touch upon other such models.

**NM:** I think more than just a use of open data as a function of the lab, what the Bihar Innovation Lab does is enables conversations that were not happening previously and that is the basis of any kind of change that is to happen, including this conversation for example. The challenges of urban India are fundamentally different and the ways you can tackle or change them are different from rural India. A lot of it has to do with what kinds of public service delivery is a greater challenge here versus there. With the Bihar Innovation Lab you are focussing on health care for which in the urban space, there is more option and choice and things that are available, and ways of organizing yourself in ways that allows you to access something that doesn't fundamentally exist in the rural space.

**DD:** There is a lot more focus on design that is happening within the lab. User-centred, Research focussed, but still design that is happening within the lab as opposed to design that is being outsourced.

**NM:** I think Arndt already mentioned this, that prototyping is so important. Identifying what those solutions are and continuously working through them is essentially what's most important. Even with apps - what you’re (Ramanjit) saying about a lot of apps being available online and not being downloaded. I think there is a lot of learning just there - to keep learning and working upon. Its about having a mindset of ‘we need to work through this problem. Who are the people we need to bring in to make this happen?’

**DD:** We’d like to now open the floor for questions.

**Anupam Varghese:** My name is Anupam, I work at a company called EKO. I have a question around some really interesting insights - you mentioned information is power, and governments are trying to act as platforms, and platforms as governments. What this brings out is perhaps a clash of two worlds that are fundamentally different. Government is a world with boundaries and structures and internet is a world that doesn’t have those boundaries and structures. It is a clash of two very strong opposite ended cultures. Therefore open data coming from government - you have an irony of sorts in just that phrase. So it will be really interesting to see how this plays out. I think this whole thing will really not take off without a trust model that is perhaps built out where sharing of this government data can truly become open. There is a trust model where despite having people living in bounded places in a boundless world people are really weary about what happens if my data gets used by another country - this clash will continue. Perhaps you can have innovation pretty localised, but in the true spirit of internet, when you talk about really opening it up, I think some fundamental blocks, or some reconciliation of sorts is required.

**Hima Batavia:** Esko, you mentioned that pyramid structures are always detrimental and awful. I was wondering what is the shape of a structure that is effective - is it a line? Is it a circle? Is it concentric circles?

**EK:** I think what we face today is the necessary next phase in the development of humanity and the next phase of us doing things together in more efficient. And
again, this is also to partially answer the second question, as suggested already, if we see in terms of hierarchies or pyramids - they make assumptions that are just not corrected. One of the basic assumption is the reductionist way of thinking. What we do absolutely need to understand is the complex nature and the linked nature of the problems we face. It is about seeing things in a much broader and much more connected way which then brings us to different forms of network structures. What the most efficient ones seem to be, from a scientific point of view, is very emergent, very contextual answers to the problems we face. So essentially you can't create an organisation before the need. The organisation is a continuous process of organising depending on the situation. We are coming from generic answers to highly contextualised answers and that to me is also the next phase of governance. Now we do have the tools today but our mindsets are old fashioned. So I would say that the real challenge is not to come with new applications, thats only partially the right answer, but changing our mindsets - and thats the sense making part of it again.

SC: Two sentences for Anupam. One - read 'The Closed World' by Paul Edwards which is a book about the making of computers and the making of internet and the cold war. Second is - we do not use internet because we trust the websites on the internet, we use it because it adds value to our lives. I think the same goes for the government - we do not like the government because we do not trust it, but it adds value to our lives. There are certain things we cannot do ourselves and hence we have turn to government.

Divya Datta
Divya Datta anchors the Bihar Innovation Lab effort at the Center for Knowledge Societies. She holds specific interest in ‘Applied Innovation for Developmental Impact’ which serves as the foundation of all her design and research initiatives. Divya has been the principal designer of the Vaccine Delivery Kit which is a holistic resource device for field immunization delivery that ensures high quality and efficiency of healthcare services. Over her various projects at CKS she has gained expertise in rural development; chiefly in health care delivery, education and livelihoods and capacity building.

Ramanjit Chima
Ramanjit Chima is a senior policy analyst with Google, based in Delhi. He currently helps lead Google’s public policy and government affairs work in India, having joined the company at the start of 2010. He holds a Bachelors in Arts and Law (Honours) from the National Law School of India University, Bangalore, where he was Chief Editor for Volume 5 of the Indian Journal of Law and Technology. He has studied Internet regulation as an independent research fellow with the Sarai programme of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, and contributed to Freedom House’s 2009 Freedom on the Internet report.
Start-up Governance

An account of Startup Weekend Delhi*

Leading up to the 2014 General Elections, the Adianta School for Leadership and Innovation hosted Start-up Weekend at the Vihara Innovation Campus. The theme for this Start-Up Weekend Delhi, supported by NASSCOM 10,000 Start-ups initiative, was ‘Governance’. Between the 11th and 13th of April 2014, over 40 participants at Startup Weekend collaborated to develop innovative and fresh ideas to address the challenges of governance. Below is a list of the seven start-up ideas that emerged as the most popular.

i-Teach
A website that serves as a social media platform to empower teachers to make connections with other educators, share learning material, monitor job portals for vacancies, catch up with the latest research and collaborate with other academicians. The site also trains teachers to use various web based tools and allows them to keep themselves motivated by staying up to date with the latest innovations in education.
Happy Grievance
A public grievance portal and analytics platform, that provides segregated information and opportunities to entrepreneurs, government, local politicians and non-governmental organisations.

Clean Advertising
A “Use ME to advertise YOU”, business model that uses dead space on dustbins across the city to help a company attract its target market. Using CSR funds, this model allows the companies to earn goodwill, take ownership of the sad state of garbage in cities across the country, at the same time reach its target audience.

HopQ
An app based service that will help reduce stress on transaction queues often found in places like busy metro stations. This app works in a manner similar to swipe or transaction cards that allow users avoid payment queues. Through this app, physical tokens will be substituted with online remote transactions, using QR codes that can be scanned in real-time at designated locations.

Juicy Visualizer
A website or app based engine for visual representation of scattered data to make better and informed decisions. The tool helps draw inferences from any input data coming from any source for just about any query. The inferences from the data are then presented visually so as to assist in the decision making process.

Reality Reporters
A GIS and Google Maps based app that works as a monitoring and reporting tool for grievance redressal catering to the general population of an area.

Pindrop
An app that uses area pin codes to search for the relevant government officials and their contact details so that a user can seek redress for an issue or a grievance at hand. In case, the relevant official is not responsive, or a user is dissatisfied with the response/solution, the issue is auto-escalated to a senior official. Issues that have been raised can also be viewed as they are sorted by pin code and city.

* Start-up Weekend is a global movement started to inspire, education and empower individuals, teams and communities, to come together over a weekend long workshop to pitch, and eventually collaborate on their start-up ideas. Start-up Weekend Governance Edition was held on 11th April 2014, at the Vihara Innovation Campus, New Delhi.
Democracy 2.0

An account of presentations at PechaKucha Night #26*

How can governments use the power of data, media and technology to become more participatory, responsive and citizen-centric? At PechaKucha Night #26, we invited seven speakers, Aditya Gupta, Dheeraj Dwivedi, Sumeeta Banerji, Sumandro Chattopadhyay, Surendran Balachandran, Anil Verma and Prukalpa Sankar, to examine these questions and imagine the ideals of Democracy 2.0 by citing examples of various technology-based initiatives, against the backdrop of one of India’s most exciting national elections.

Much of the architecture of governments around the world was innovated in a period between 300-150 years ago after which there have only been incremental changes. The democratic philosophy is imminent in most governments around the world, allowing, at least in theory, for citizen engagement in political process through direct or representative models. However, democracy as we know it today comes with various challenges and shortcomings. In the case of India, a large and diverse citizenry often feels unequally represented and crippling rates of corruption have bred mistrust toward political leaders, parties and systems, leading to a tremendous yearning for change in the way government functions. Given the widespread adoption of technology, and the resulting paradigm shift in the ways in which we communicate, there is promise in revising governmental processes and imbibing Democracy 2.0.

Given that democracy is ideally representative of a nation’s people, Aditya Gupta analyzed democracy in India by urging us to critique not only government units, but rather the extent to which its ideals are practiced in our daily lives. He looked at the family as a basic social unit, and questioned whether the pillars of democracy i.e. our fundamental rights, are visible within it. Instances of a girl child having to make special cases for her education to be equal to that of her brother, of marital and child abuse, and other similar issues being buried behind veils of dignity and embarrassment are characteristic to many Indian households. Often communal and caste considerations are central in selecting spouses, as well as electing leaders. While we expect the government to safeguard our right to education, expression, religion and constitutional remedy, they are not revered at a household level. As Dr. B.R. Ambedkar suggested, democracy would fail in India, as the concept of ‘one man, one value’, an essential part of our constitution, is absent in society. These failures of democracy demand a necessary reform, not on the part of the government, but rather on the part of the Indian citizenry.
Following Aditya, Dheeraj Dwivedi talked of democracy as a decision making process that involves multiple people. He suggested the need for an equal share of power, resources and knowledge between people involved in making these decisions. One of the most common decisions a population makes is that of electing their political representatives. These decisions are heavily influenced by our family and peers, as well as the media that is often biased and selective in its broadcasts. There is often no other data that supports these decisions. However, the problem is not one of a lack of data, or the accessibility of it, but rather its scattered and incomprehensible nature. Dheeraj is working on a tool that will provide easily comprehendible data sets, presenting vital information such as political parties and their corresponding crime rates, thereby empowering the citizenry with the knowledge to make informed decisions is necessary to facilitate effective democracy.

Democracy, according to Surendran Balachandran, is not just about electing representatives but also about engaging with political, social and business leaders. All citizens are activists, and the internet not only provides us with information, but serves as a platform for mobilizing people. 188 million citizens in India access internet through their mobile phones, making mobile technologies a valuable tool through which citizens can engage with their decision makers. Change.org serves as a platform through which people can raise issues that can then be supported by other citizens. This can be seen in the example of the RTI, as previously mentioned by Anil Verma. When the Central Information Commission included national political parties within the purview of RTI, politicians spoke of amending the RTI Act. The National Campaign for Peoples’ Right to Information started a campaign that gathered significant momentum, which ultimately deferred the amendment. Surendran cited another example of a campaign started by Rajeev Chandrashekhar, an independent MP which aimed at improving access to voting facilities for soldiers of the Indian Army, in hard to reach areas. It gathered support of 77,000 citizens through the use of internet and mobile phones wherein a missed call to a provided number was counted as a signature on the petition.

Prakalpa Sankar identified an acute lack of social data as a recurring pattern across problems of urban governance in India such as waste management, traffic congestion, and poor road infrastructure. For example, when buying a house, the price of property per square feet is available, however information on sanitation rates, crime rates, and quality of public schools in the area is missing. Social Cops, an organization that uses technology to engage citizens to solve various civic issues, observed an information gap between communities. In the city of Ranchi the problem of poor street lighting was addressed by a group of five university students as a part of the I Lead India Team, for Times of India. They went about crowd-sourcing information through mobile phones in order to identify and map out the dark spots of the city and got the deputy mayor of Ranchi on board to allocate INR 2.15 crore to improve street lighting infrastructure. In another instance, the citizens of Punjabi Bagh, New Delhi, began to rate the cleanliness of their streets and Social Cops matched these ratings to corresponding safai karamcharis that work in the area.
through which an incentive system of awards for the workers was devised. According to Prukalpa, all it would take for citizens to contribute to filling the gaps in social data sets, engage with and participate in governance, is a smart phone.

The pervasive adoption of social and mobile media has supported various platforms through which citizen engagement and participatory governance can be facilitated. Sumeeta Banerji spoke about the future role of government in using these technologies for sustainable poverty reduction and human development. Greater citizen identification using ICT tools such as smart cards and biometric records can ensure greater participation, transparency and accountability. Sumeeta alluded to the potential in connecting both traditional and modern livelihoods with the market through technology that governments should explore. E-Chaupal is an example of an information service through which farmers get real time information on prices in the market, eliminate the role of middlemen and get better prices for their service. A project by UNDP facilitated NREGA women workers’ access to information regarding their entitlements under the scheme, through a voice-over technology based kiosk installed at Panchayat offices. In the light of the national election, technology could be used for election and voter awareness campaigns, as well as increasing transparency which is exemplified in the pilot project ‘paper audit trail’ through which we can see who are vote is going to as our ballot drops. Technological interventions, however rudimentary, can contribute to effective service delivery, citizen engagement, maintaining feedback loops and grievance redressal platforms.

To alleviate dissention and distrust in governance, Anil Verna’s presentation advised government to follow suit to the private sector and adopt web 2.0. Anil astutely pointed to the need for a balanced act between open accesses to government data, and regulating access to sensitive information. Despite various instances of state government initiatives using ICT, such as E-Seva in Andhra Pradesh, FRIENDS project in Kerala, online property registration, and computerization of land records, the problem remains to be one of transparency and accountability. In 1999, the Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) petitioned the government for background data, including educational, criminal, and financial records, on electoral candidates, which was eventually made mandatory by the Supreme Court in 2003. The Chief Information Commissioner passed an order in July 2013, declaring that national political parties will come under the RTI, which garnered no response, despite them being issued multiple notices. The ADR has responded by using web 2.0 strategies to increase voter awareness, through, for example, the Election Watch Reporter, an app that allows citizens to forward a photograph of any election malpractice they observe to the Election Commission of India.

As of today, technologies of communication including those of speaking, writing, and listening are ubiquitous. Sumandro Chattapadhyay discussed how these technologies need to be harnessed both by the citizenry, as well as
the government for democracy 2.0. The capacity to use and own these technologies is not uniform across the world. Government use of technology in specific ways for scanning and surveillance has significantly curtailed our democratic rights. Governments have created cases of exception, where democratic rights are upheld in some cases and not in others. The hardware of web 2.0 and internet technologies is concentrated at very specific points across the world in the form of undersea cables through which the internet runs. How the internet runs lies in the operations of organizations that we hardly have interactions with. This system doesn’t lend itself to democratic ideas. Sumandro indicated that if technology is to solve democracy, it is essential to see how democratic technology is to begin with.

Creating spaces for criticality toward the government and technologies are therefore important and in the absence of which there will always be spaces outside legality and orthodoxy, which will challenge these things. So it is imperative then to not only use technology in democracy, but to also bring democracy to technology.

*Pecha Kucha is the Japanese sound for ‘chit chat’, and is a unique presentation format that originated in Japan as an informal forum for young designers and architects to show and talk about their work, network with others, and have a conversation about art, design, architecture and more. Presenters/speakers show 20 image-only slides, for 20 seconds each, which makes for a rapid and energetic presentation. Pecha Kucha Night #26 was held on 17th April 2014, at the Vihara Innovation Campus, in New Delhi. It is run by Center for Knowledge Societies and the Adianta School off a license from Klein and Dytham Architects in Tokyo Japan.

Aditya Gupta
Aditya Gupta is a gender facilitator and a social entrepreneur attempting to challenge the problem of gender-based violence through his initiative, People for Parity. Aditya hails from a small town in Punjab and has grown up in Delhi. He has previously worked as a consultant with The Parthenon Group and in technology based farmer interventions with TechnoServe in East Africa. He dreams of being a writer and a songwriter someday.

Sumeeta Banerji
Sumeeta Banerji is a social development professional and currently Heads the Democratic Governance Program at the United Nations Development Programme in India. She handles a portfolio of programmes providing technical assistance and policy advice to key Government of India Ministries and State Governments on governance themes including public administration, access to justice, capacity development for local governance and decentralized planning, human development, and rights based social security interventions.

Anil Verma
Anil Verma is an Army Officer, who retired after 37 years of distinguished service in the Indian Army. During his tenure in the Army, he has held various staff and command appointments all over India in different terrains and operational conditions. He was awarded GOC-in-C Commendation and Chief of Army Staff Commendation card twice for his distinguished service. He joined ADR in December 2013.
Surendran Balachandran

Surendran Balachandran works as a senior campaigner with Change.org India Team, the world’s largest petition platform. He has been actively involved in helping people start, join and win grassroots campaigns to bring about positive social change. He has been working with people from across the country who start petitions on Change.org, supporting them with campaign and strategic inputs to make them win. Prior to joining Change.org, Surendran was associated with Nokia and Oxfam made “create to inspire@ fellowship program.

Dheeraj Dwivedi

Dheeraj Dwivedi is a Software Engineer at LinkedIn. A full stack developer, focused on designing and developing highly scalable and performing applications, Dheeraj was the winner at Startup Weekend 2014 on Governance, held in Delhi. He specializes in web page performance optimization, Java/JSP, PHP, SQL databases, XHTML, jQuery, Spring, Hibernate, Node.js.

Prukalpa Sankar

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The Lab Model of Governing Social and Public Innovation

An Essay by Giulio Quaggiotto

“One can only really understand a complex system by interacting with it”
– Dave Snowden

1. Labs as a practice

If there were an imaginary tag cloud of the emerging literature on public sector and social innovation labs, it seems to me that two words in particular would stand out: “dilemma” and “practice”. Indicatively, both are present in the title of Geoff Mulgan’s “The radical’s dilemma - overview of the practice and prospects of social and public labs”, perhaps the best introduction to the state of the art in this field. The practice or running a successful lab, Mulgan notes, “requires a great deal of subtlety” (a notion we’ll come back to later – italics are mine).

Perhaps frequent references to “dilemmas” are a reflection of the fact that whilst it is clear what labs are a reaction or response to (the rigidity of traditional bureaucracies and their inadequacy to tackle the complex challenges facing modern-day societies), quite how the lab model will evolve (or exapt) and whether it is a transient reflection of the zeitgeist or a more permanent form of governing innovation for the public good is somewhat less certain.

Trying to capture the spirit of the current period of labs proliferation and experimentation, Zaid Hassain, in his book “The Social Labs Revolution” defines labs as platforms for addressing complex social challenges that have three characteristics: they are social (they bring different stakeholders together to co-produce solutions), experimental (in contrast to the rigidity of traditional planning) and systemic (they aim to bring about system-level change).

A global taxonomy of labs (like the one produced by Parson Deisis) would reveal...
that they come in many different incarnations. Mulgan proposes a labs categorisation by method, the sector they focus on, the level to which they are embedded in the machinery of government and whether they work upstream or downstream in the experimentation process (see also Marrs’ report “Labs: designing the future” and “The wisdom of Tupperware” by Geraldine Cahille and Satsuko van Antwerp). The lab I manage, for example, focuses on big data and real time digital sources for public good with specific thematic priorities (e.g. monitoring and implementation of new policies), produces proofs of concepts and early stage prototypes and is a joint initiative of the United Nations and the Government of Indonesia.

Key to the understanding of how innovation labs operate is the notion of practice, both in terms of learning by doing but also a body of beliefs and behaviours informed by an ethos of openness and “perpetual beta”. In this sense, labs could adopt the old positive deviance motto as their own: “It is easier to act your way into a new way of thinking than think your way into a new way of acting”.

In the reminder of this essay, I will try to unpack a few aspects of the “practice” of running labs, which in my experience, are particularly crucial to understanding the way they operate. This is meant to be more of a practitioner’s reflection than a comprehensive overview.

2. From rules to heuristics: the chef and the recipemaker

Because labs aim to tackle “wicked”, intractable societal problems, the practice of running them can only be based on heuristics (rules of thumb) rather than rigid prescribed rules. This is a shift that, in my experience, is not easy for many public sector organisations to make. In this respect, labs can be said to challenge the very premises under which many of their host organisations were created.

I remember hearing an anecdote in a training (not sure whether it is spurious or not!) that a major international coffee chain originally issued guidelines to its employees to greet every new customer entering their cafes with “welcome”. They eventually realized, however, that this did not work well in certain cultures. As a consequence, the guidelines to employees were changed to “make the customers feel welcome”, leaving it up to the individual to decide what would be the most culturally appropriate way of doing that. It is a similar shift from rigid prescriptions to setting boundaries within which there is room for adaptation that the labs practice calls for.

To use the metaphor popularized by Dave Snowden, labs require chefs, not recipemakers (this is why they don’t easily lend themselves to the toolkit approach).

His 7 principles of intervention in complex systems provide a useful guiding framework for anyone running a lab:

1. You need multiple parallel experiments and they should be based on different and competing theories/hypotheses.
2. They must be safe-to-fail, which (to state the obvious) means that if they fail you must be able to survive and consequences and recover
3. A percentage must fail, if not you are not stretching the boundaries enough and your scanning range is reduced in consequence
4. Each experiment must be coherent, not just a stab in the dark. Ideally coherence should be based on evidence,
5. Actions speak louder than words, if you are trying to counter a negative story then taking small visible actions that make the story impossible to tell is the best policy.
6. You don’t start any experiment, safe-to-fail or otherwise unless you can monitor its impact in real time, or at least within correction time
7. Have a damping or amplification strategy. Working both out in advance is key, so you are ready to respond quickly to either success or failure.

Run these principles as a checklist against the traditional way of planning in the public sector and you can immediately see where the tension might arise. Bureaucracies were created to ensure predictability and therefore rely on rules and clearly defined boundaries. Labs, on the other hand, thrive on ambiguity: they explore edges and embrace cross-pollination and serendipity. How to reconcile these two worlds?

In the reminder of this essay I will explore some elements of the practice of running a lab, which in my experience, imply specific design decisions from those wishing to establish one.

3. Elements of a practice

a. Find and reflect back
Perhaps the greatest added value that labs provide to host organizations is their relentless focus on what is happening outside of their walls. Horizon scanning, spotting examples of positive deviance and honing in on lead users, reverse
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b. Experiments to rehearse the future

allow for the process of osmosis to be sustainable over time. Labs therefore call for a high degree of highly contextual “subtlety” to make sure that the right chemical balance between outside and inside is maintained so as to allow for the process of osmosis to be sustainable over time.

e. Engaging the non-contractibles

Rob Cross at the University of Virginia has pioneered the use of social network analysis to identify “loci of energy” inside an organization that can drive innovation. These typically have no relation to the official organogram and tend to be in a continuous state of flux. A key element of the practice of running a lab is being able to shift from a rigid, org chart view of the world to a “heat map”: spotting constantly changing pockets of energy and channeling it towards the desired change. Labs can be thought of as energy dowsers of sorts within their host organisations. Too often however the temptation of wanting to “convert” what Etan Semple dubbed “immoveable objects” to new approaches, just because the org chart seems to dictate so, can divert important resources in the wrong direction.

“Energy dowsing” is all the more important when turning to the outside world. Here I found the concept of “non-contractible effort” originally developed by professor
Carliss Baldwin at Harvard to be particularly useful in explaining the way labs challenge traditional boundaries while at the same time presenting a unique opportunity for organisations to “re-imagine the way they solve problems” (to follow GovLab’s motto). The “non-contractibles”, according to Baldwin, are those that traditional bureaucracies will never be able to formally hire and yet are essential to collaboratively solve “wicked problems” because of their unique expertise and/or energy. Traditional bureaucracies don’t know how to locate this talent or evaluate how good it is. Perhaps more importantly, the “non-contractibles” will never want to work for traditional bureaucracies because they typically deem them to be too callous, too unrewarding or too irrelevant (or a combination of all of the above!).

Innovation labs can be thought of as powerful catalysts to activate the “non-contractible effort” for the purpose of social change. In doing so, they typically adopt tools and techniques that challenge core processes (from HR to procurement) in their host organisations. Take for example prizes and challenges to solve intractable problems: many organisations that I worked with don’t contemplate this instrument as a way of procuring external expertise. And I am sure many lab practitioners can recall the face of their counterparts in government the first time they suggested to run a “hackathon”!

A key governance challenge for labs is to define a suitable framework to gradually redesign processes that were intended for an org-chart, impermeable-boundaries type of world to suit a world where there is a constellation of distributed expertise inside and outside the firewall. All of this while avoiding the organizational antibodies attempting to quench experimentation. For instance, while running the innovation practice in a previous job, I introduced the practice of R&D events to replace traditional trainings. Participants would get hands-on exposure to a new approach (say, design thinking through a public service “safari”) and, crucially, some seed money was made available for those willing to practice what they learned through a prototype project. This achieved three objectives: introducing new approaches without departing too radically from current organizational practice, surfacing early champions and creating organizational room to experiment.

Focusing on building meaningful relationships with internal champions or external non-contractibles is quite different from focusing on managing transactions with citizens. It means, for example, that being interesting (so as to attract talent to solve complex problems) is as important as being efficient. It’s the difference between publishing an impersonal vacancy announcement filled with bureaucratic language and a blog written in first person by the hiring manager to explain why the job is unique and challenging. Labs live on these nuances that are the stuff that (meaningful) relations are made of.

d. High touch networks

As Ben Williamson argued, there is a specific stream of advocacy and practice on public sector innovation labs that is informed by the notion of “algorithmic governance”: an extreme form of human-computer interaction in digital governance utilising “zero-touch technologies” that can act autonomously of human oversight (Margaretts & Dunleavy 2013) in order to automate and digitize the interaction between government and citizen.

However, there is an emerging - and, in my view, more promising - practice of lab experimentation that is more concerned about the proactive engagement of “smart citizens” and mashing algorithmic insights provided by big data with “small”, citizen-generated data for localized action. Empowering communities with ownership and sensemaking of the data they produce thereby increasing their resilience is a key preoccupation for those who embrace this approach. “High touch” is in this approach is a stated goal (rather than a dreaded prospect), as illustrated in the smart citizens manifesto.

Alberto Cottica nicely summarized the dichotomy between the above two visions, by talking about “type 1” are “type 2” smart cities:

**Type 1 smart cities**

- are centralized: all smarts are concentrated in the technologists in corporate and university labs, and the role of citizens is to consume their various gadgets.
- Type 2 ones are full of networks to purchase locally produced food, urban farming, sewing cafes, hackerspaces, fablabs. Type 1s invest huge amount of money on ultrafast mobile networks. Type 2s conjure, as from thin air, wifi city networks that ride on the back of routers already installed in cafes, public libraries and our own homes (this happened in a matter of hours during the earthquake in spring 2012). Students in Type 1 smart cities go to school with tablets. Those of Type 2s use creative commons syllabi – and probably can mix and match the lecturing of their local teachers with that of the Khan Academy or similar experiences. Type 1 smart cities of Type 1 concentrate production (agriculture, manufacturing, finance) to large companies, organized to take advantage of increasing returns to scale. Those of Type 2 distribute it, at least in part, across many small entities: permaculturists, makers, community lending agencies.

Quite where a specific lab stands in the spectrum between “type 1” and “type 2” has important consequences in terms of the activities its sponsors and the way it defines and measures success. As someone who manages a lab focusing on big data for policy making, I am very conscious of this distinction.
The question of scale when it comes to labs has also attracted lots of attention given the pressure to demonstrate results to prove the validity of their modus operandi. Whilst there is a general consensus that labs aim for systemic change (see Marss periodic table of systemic change), in practice there is a tension between those who equate scale with big numbers and broad, national or international impact and those who seem envisage scale as sustainable success within more narrow, contextualised boundaries. On the one hand, you have statements like “don’t approach me with a project proposal unless you aim to affect at least 20 million people”. On the other, people argue that “success to us is not one scaled solution. But multiple prototypes taken forward by local teams”. Underpinning these two opposite view is often a different underlying paradigm: on the one hand, the metaphor for scale is industrial/manufacturing production (often with a reference to successful tech startups), on the other it is evolution and adaptation to local contexts.

As I argued elsewhere, the practice of labs can differ quite substantially depending on which metaphor they embrace.

4. Where to start

Whether it is reflecting external expertise or rehearsing possible features, embracing experimentation or (re)defining scale: the practice of running a lab requires making deliberate design choices to depart from established organizational practices, but with a great degree of “subtlety”. Modeling new behaviours and approaches through actual prototypes has, in my experience, significantly more chances of success than establishing working groups to evaluate the pros and cons of a particular option. Asking what skills citizens might have to contribute and what they have actually already done is more likely to yield useful insights than asking them what do they need. Thinking through which organizational competencies to develop through experimentation rather than which tools to purchase stand greater chances of getting early buy-in. Investing the time in developing meaningful relationships with citizens, potential problem solvers and partners and nurturing early champions is also equally crucial.

A portfolio of informed experiments and genuine empathy with stakeholders is a better place to start for a lab than finding a fancy location with Google-style slides or access to the latest gadgets. The former are typically not within the comfort zone of traditional bureaucracies while investment in the latter tend to find easier acceptance through the system. Relations, not transactions, are at the core of the labs practice.

Bibliography

12. MaRS solutions lab periodic table of systems change. Accessed from


Giulio Quaggiotto

Giulio Quaggiotto is the manager of Pulse Lab Jakarta, a joint innovation initiative of the United Nations and the Government of Indonesia to develop a body of practice around the use of big data for public policy. Prior to this, Giulio set up UNDP’s (social) innovation practice out of UNDP regional center in Bratislava, adding social innovation camps, design thinking, user-led innovation, crowdfunding, challenges and foresight (among others) to the traditional set of development tools and approaches. Giulio’s career includes stints in the private sector, the World Bank, WWF and the BBC
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Case Studies
NextDrop (India)

NextDrop is a social enterprise that uses text messages to simplify urban water management in the twin cities of Hubli-Dharwad, in the southern state of Karnataka. It works with the local water board valvemen to provide accurate and timely information to households on the availability of piped water in their area and enables water utilities to track the real-time status of their distribution system. Through NextDrop, valvemen relate information about the level of water in the cities’ reservoirs to engineers, who in turn, determine which parts of the city should be supplied water, and relay that back to the valvemen. The valvemen then call an interactive voice response (IVR) through their mobile phone. These IVR messages are used by NextDrop to generate SMS updates that are sent to local residents 30-60 minutes prior to delivery.

Organisation: NextDrop is founded and headed by Anu Sridharan. The senior management also comprises of a Chief Technical Architect, Chief Operating Officer, Vice President for Product Development and Chief Growth Officer. Other team members include product development associates, media and communication associates, sales manager, business development managers, and consultants.

Location: Hubli and Dharwad

Inception: 2010

Business Model: On receiving water level information, the valvemen call an interactive voice response. These IVR messages are then used by NextDrop to generate SMS updates that are sent to local residents 30-60 minutes prior to delivery. Customers currently pay Rs.10/- a month for the advanced water alerts.

Takeaway: A ‘smart-grid-lite’ solution using data-based feedback loops between residents and the municipality, allowing a demand and supply-based regulation and distribution of water.
Sunvai (India)

The Right to Hearing Act, implemented by the state of Rajasthan in 2012, provides citizens the right to a hearing for any grievance or complaint related to government services and employees. Citizens can lodge complaints to Public Hearing Officers and Appellate Authorities, at the Gram Panchayat, Tehsil, Sub-block district or divisional level, nearest to their residence. The Public Hearing Officer on receipt of the complaint gives a pink slip as a receipt with the place and date of hearing, typically within the next 7 days. After the hearing, the issue has to be redressed in a stipulated time of 15 days. Information about the penalty on guilty officers and employees is displayed on notice boards, as mandated by the Act. Complainants can appeal to the Appellate Authorities, against the decision of the public hearing officer if they are not satisfied. In case of non-compliance and delays, there is also a provision of penalties ranging from Rs. 500-5000 for the concerned officer.

Organisation: Every state government office has a Public Hearing Officer, First Appellate Authority, Second Appellate Authority, a Revision Authority and an Information and Facilitation Centre, which includes officers at citizen care centers and call centers.

Location: Rajasthan
Inception: 2012

Takeaway → The Act not only ensures effective redressal of public grievances but also creates awareness among common people about their rights and entitlements. It ensures accountability among the government officials to answer the public grievances in a stipulated time.
Data.gov.in (India)

The data.gov.in portal developed using an open source platform called Open Government Platform (OGPL), created by a joint initiative between National Informatics Centre (NIC) in India and General Services Administration (GSA) in the United States. The portal is a single-point access to datasets by various ministries and departments of the Government of India. These datasets are available in various formats, such as fast changing data, spreadsheets and website links. It already has over 6000 open government data sets, some of which have recently released APIs. The platform is also available in open source on GitHub. An increasing demand for transparency of government functioning has led to the availability of open government data to enable rational debate and better decision making in meeting civil society needs.

Organisation: Run by a team at the National Informatics Centre, NDSAP Cell is headed by Data Controller, who could be assisted by number of data contributors, who will head his team of data analyst, visualizers and programmers.

Location: New Delhi
Inception: 2012

Business Model: The platform is used by various ministries and departments of government of India to upload datasets, documents, applications and other shareable data. Data.gov.in provides resources to ministries for making data sets readable, before publishing them. The datasets can be used by the citizens of India for conducting research, develop applications and more.

Takeaway: India not only has a government mandate for transparency but also has the National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy, 2012, supporting the open governance agenda. The portal creates opportunities for, and encourages innovation for public services delivery by making high value information available online for public use.
I Paid A Bribe (India)

Ipaidabribe.com is an online initiative undertaken by Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy-a Bangalore based not-for-profit organisation, with an aim of harnessing the collective energy of citizens to tackle corruption and bringing systemic changes in the government work procedures. Through this platform, citizens can report instances of bribes paid, bribes resisted and also honest government officials.


Location: Bangalore
Inception: 2010

Business Model: Ipaidabribe.com encourages citizens of India to report the instances when people paid and resisted bribes and also did not pay bribes because of good government systems and officials. When citizens report the nature, number, type, location of the bribe act, IPaidABribe takes up these issues with the government and design effective and more transparent government rules, regulations and procedures.

Takeaway → Seek citizen engagement via an online platform to highlight instances of corruption and bring crucial systemic changes in government procedures.
Data.gov (US Open Data Portal)

Data.gov is a US government website that seeks to be a repository for all the information the government collects and allows public access to the collection of shareable information of various federal, state and local government departments. The initiative aims at promoting accountability among government officials towards the citizens. It also encourages citizens to use the imperative, machine readable datasets innovatively for improving the effectiveness of government procedures. US private citizens can access this information to build apps, fix broken links, make policy recommendations, design data visualizations, and develop new codes and tools.

Organisation: The data.gov is managed by US General Service Administration's Office of Citizen Services and Innovative Technologies along with US Chief Information Officer and Chief Technology Officer. The team also comprises of Federal Program Managers, Geospatial Architects, Program Directors, IT Specialists, Metadata Experts among others.

Location: Washington
Inception: 2009

Business Model: Datasets, ranging from downloadable to website links to apps of various departments of federal, state and local government are available for easy access at the data.gov portal. US private citizens can access this information to build apps, fix broken links, make policy recommendations, design data visualizations, and develop new codes and tools and more.

Takeaway → The Obama government was the first to have within it, a mandate for open governance of which open data is a component. It encourages third party participation in improving public services as well as increase government accountability via the open data portal.
Gramvaani (India)

Gram Vaani, is a social technology company incubated out of IIT Delhi. Using simple technologies and social context to design tools, they have been able to impact communities at large. More than two million users in over 7 Indian States and partnership with over 80 organisations in the social sector, they have contributed to 40 rural radio stations capable to manage and share content over mobile and web, arrest of corrupt ration shop officials in Jharkhand through complaints made on this platform, women sarpanches in Uttar Pradesh exchanging opinions on their work with government officials, and monitoring and reporting of waste management in 18 wards of Delhi to hold MCD accountable.

Organisation: Gram Vaani was founded by Aaditeshwar Seth and Mayank Shivam. Ashish Tandon is the Vice President, Business Development and Strategy. Gramvaani has a technology team that takes care of software that runs the mobile and web platforms of the organisation.

Location: New Delhi
Inception: 2009

Key Projects:
- Spanning vAutomate technology users of our IVR suite - Information campaigns on the Mobile Vaani voice-based social media network, Mobile Vaani partners, Community radio automation using Grameen Radio Inter Networking System (GRINS)

Takeaway → Gram Vaani works at the interface of technology, media and development building technological solutions to facilitate complaints redressal, media outreach and communication with rural populations.
Transparent Chennai (India)

Transparent Chennai seeks to empower residents of Chennai, by aggregating, creating and disseminating data and research about pivotal civic issues. By highlighting government performance in the provision of basic services, Transparent Chennai enables residents, especially the poor, to have a greater voice in governance. To tackle the limited data availability, Transparent Chennai works closely with individuals and citizen groups to create maps and data to understand problems in the city, and make claims on the government for their rights and entitlements. Data and research is disseminated via their website, blogs, emails, publications, meeting with citizens, researchers and policy makers in conferences, and through media in both English and Tamil.

Organisation: Nithya V. Raman is the Director of Transparent Chennai followed by Prabu Raj who is the Technical Lead. The team consists of Researchers involved with the various projects to collect and make data available to the citizens of Chennai.

Location: Chennai

Inception: 2009

Key Projects:

- **Solid Waste Management** - Focuses on informal workers and the waste sector by filling knowledge gaps and understanding about waste and its management.
- **The Chennai Metropolitan Water** - Examines and analyzes water accessibility and sanitation service focusing on the urban poor.
- **Slums and informal settlements** - Focuses on policies towards slums in the city and the history of their implementation. Also understanding and measuring access to services in slums.
- **Pedestrian infrastructure, roads** - Focuses on road safety, pedestrian infrastructure, and public transportation.
- **Public toilets and sanitation** - Focuses on the government’s role in construction, maintenance and operation of public toilets.
- **Electoral accountability** - Collects and disseminates the available information about the performance of elected representatives in office.
- **City governance** - Conducts research and analysis on the municipal laws, planning processes, institutional structure, and organisational arrangements for basic service provision in the city.
- **JnNURM** - The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission aims to provide investment support to build municipal infrastructure.
- **Heritage** - It focuses on conservation of the city heritage.

**Takeaway** - Works closely with the citizens to obtain data which is then disseminated via social media platforms in a bid to encourage transparency and citizen participation in governance.
Forum Virium (Helsinki)

Forum Virium, develops new digital services in cooperation with public sector and organisations like Nokia, Telia Sonera, and IBM. It records user experiences of the services, to improve a product or service and to ensure that end users are also developers of new services. Its core activity includes managing development projects following themes including Smart City, Media, Growth Services and Innovative Communities. Helsinki Region Infoshare (HRI) project makes public and private sector data available on a common cloud, and is integrated into the City of Helsinki’s daily operations. The Open Ahjo project has created the public documents on decision making systems and all of the attachments are available through one source in a machine-readable format.

Organisation: Forum Virium, Helsinki is lead by Jarmo Eskelinen (CEO). The organisation comprises others who are involved as Project Managers, Programme Managers, Development Director, Communication Managers and other experts.

Location: Helsinki
Inception: 2005

Key Projects:
CitySDK - It builds open interfaces that are compatible between cities and across national borders. Open Cities - It promotes the usage of open data in Europe.

Smart Urban Spaces - Focuses on developing smart city services that work from one country to another accessible by mobile phone, making urban living easier.

Takeaway: Ensures better and efficient delivery of public services and development through effective curation and dissemination of public data, and promoting active engagement of citizens.
Social Cops (India)

Social Cops, harnesses citizen voice as a resource to solve real-life problems. Through the use of technology, they enable the creation of connected and synergistic communities characterized by an efficient flow of information, highly engaged citizens and efficient feedback systems. They work with community stakeholders ranging from public agencies, corporates, NGOs to local volunteer groups and resident welfare associations to harness citizen voice as a resource to solve a spectrum of real life problems such civic issues, women’s safety and public health.

Organisation: Social Cops was founded by Varun Banka, Prukulpa Shankar and Harjoben Singh. Prukulpa Shankar is also the Business Lead for Social Cops. Social Cops also has an advisory group of board members and mentors.

Location: New Delhi
Inception: 2012

Key Projects:
Boosting public worker morale using crowd sourced citizen data - Crowd sourced citizen sanitation scores is used to rate streets based on cleanliness (on a scale of 1-10) through data collection.

Fixing open manholes in Delhi - The focus was on specific issue of “open manhole” and citizen reports were crowd sourced with specific information

5 Students, more than 2000 street lights- Known as ‘I Lead Ranchi’ where five university students deployed INR 2.15 Crores to fix the street lights of Ranchi to drive away the darkness from the streets.

Using mobile phones to reduce cervical cancer susceptibility - 60 women were chosen to sign up for “Health for Her” updates via a simple missed call.

Takeaway- Crowd sources data to build a social data layer around civic issues through digital technologies for citizen engagement, and works with on ground partners who can implement solutions.
Bihar Innovation Lab (India)

Bihar Innovation Lab is a first-of-its-kind collaborative initiative between the Center for Knowledge Societies and the Ananya Partners Alliance of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which aims at designing, developing and deploying high impact solutions to Bihar’s most pressing healthcare challenges in Maternal and Child Healthcare, Nutrition and Sanitation. The vaccine delivery kit, an integrated service delivery kit for health workers, is the harbinger in a series of five life saving innovations that are designed, developed and piloted by BIL. The Lab also offers innovation training for partners and government staff to accelerate the diffusion of innovation techniques.

Organisation: Aditya Dev Sood, Founder and CEO of CKS is the Chairman of BIL and Divya Datta, Director-Innovation, anchors the Bihar Innovation Lab effort. BIL also comprises of a team of Researchers who are involved with various projects undertaken by BIL.

Location: New Delhi
Inception: 2013
Funding: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Key Projects:
Vaccine Delivery Innovation Initiative (VDII) - Application of ethnographic research, to better understand barriers to routine immunization from the unique perspective of users.

Vaccine Delivery Kit Initiative (VDKI) - Focused on the development of design solutions to address challenges identified through its antecedent, the Vaccine Delivery Innovation Initiative (VDII).

Landscape Study: Understanding the public health ecology of Bihar - Focused on issues of healthcare, nutrition and sanitation to radically improve the health of the mother and the child.

Patient Identity and Health Information System including Artefacts - Involves designing a new Patient Identity and Health Information System including Artefacts to ensure accurate patient information tracking.

Takeaway: Intensive ethnographic research, design analysis, multi-format solutioneering, and crowd sourcing ideas from decision makers and local communities alike, are core functions of the lab. The lab’s mandate also involves in creating capacity for innovation and creative problem solving within the public health system.
Open Knowledge Foundation (UK)

The Open Knowledge Foundation (OKFN) is dedicated to building tools, projects and communities that promote open knowledge in all its forms. It’s a collaborative effort made up of open data and open knowledge enthusiasts around the globe. Their network’s activities are organised around local working groups and collaborative projects. Each initiative has a different focus, but all are united by a common set of concerns related to the widespread sharing of data and knowledge across borders.

Organisation: OKFN comprises of a Leadership team which includes Laura James, the CEO and Rufus Pollock, who is the President and Co-founder. Apart from this there is a development team that is involved with fund raising, finance reporting and forecasting. There is a networking team that deals with organising global events and building networks. There is knowledge, projects, commercial and an operations team.

Location: United Kingdom
Inception: 2004

Key Projects:
Apps for Europe - Apps for Europe supports entrepreneurs and developers turning open data into businesses

D-Cent - D-CENT creates digital tools for direct democracy and economic empowerment. It helps communities to share data, collaborate and organize their operations.

DM2E - DM2E is a project that enables building the tools and communities to enable humanities researchers to work with manuscripts

Global Open Data Initiative - The Global Open Data Initiative (GODI) is an initiative led by civil society organisations to share principles and resources for governments and societies

Open Data Privacy - The Open Data and Privacy project explores specifically the issues around the rights of individuals to choose what happens to the data held about them.

Open Data Index - The Open Data Index is an annual expert peer-reviewed snapshot of the country-level Open Data Census, and has been developed to ignite discussions between citizens and governments.

Takeaway: The organization promotes openness using advocacy, technology and training to unlock information and enables people to work with it to create and share knowledge. OKFN also has an advisory expertise around the legalities of open content issues.
Towards the conceptualization of a Civic Innovation Lab, CKS organized a series of study sessions and events inviting designers, development experts, social entrepreneurs, academics, policy makers, activists and politicians to build a vision for a Civic Innovation Lab. In early February, CKS began hosting fortnightly study sessions at the Vihara Innovation Campus, opening out the conversation to a larger interest group. Through these sessions, the group discussed the essence of citizen-centric governance, educated themselves on the possibilities of open data in the Indian context, and began setting in place the ideological framework for the Lab.

The Challenge of Urban Public Service Delivery: The Case of Waste Management

A Workshop towards envisioning Civic Innovation Lab

Towards the conceptualization of a Civic Innovation Lab, CKS organized a series of study sessions and events inviting designers, development experts, social entrepreneurs, academics, policy makers, activists and politicians to build a vision for a Civic Innovation Lab. In early February, CKS began hosting fortnightly study sessions at the Vihara Innovation Campus, opening out the conversation to a larger interest group. Through these sessions, the group discussed the essence of citizen-centric governance, educated themselves on the possibilities of open data in the Indian context, and began setting in place the ideological framework for the Lab.
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Modeled around the conversation and outcomes of the study sessions, CKS organized Design Public 5, on the 14th of March 2014. This high-level conclave on Innovation in the Public Interest brought together independent thinkers and practitioners as well as representatives from Google, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Center for Internet and Society, the Aam Aadmi Party, the Center for the Study of Developing Society, UNDP CGap, DFID, the Sushant School of Design, amongst many others. Through a series of panel discussions and workshop sessions, the assembled group began answering essential questions about the Lab. What set of urban challenges should the Lab focus on? What would be the key activities of the Lab? Which agencies, individuals and partners need to be involved for the Lab to work? What engagement model between the above entities is required to operationalize the Lab? How would the Lab be funded?

A significant outcome from a study session held post Design Public, was the need to focus on one challenge, and understand it through ethnographic research, expert interviews and social media analysis. After careful consideration of the feedback and advice received through these series of conversations, CKS narrowed its focus on the problem of garbage and waste management in the city of Delhi, to begin imagining the potential of the Civic Innovation Lab.

Having chosen to address a quintessentially urban public service, CKS reached out to experts in the field. Researchers, activists, citizen groups, entrepreneurs and politicians engaged in various ways with the challenge of garbage and waste management in the city of Delhi. On the 15th of April 2014, CKS organised a workshop, wherein each of these experts presented the challenge from their own distinct and unique point of view.

In all, the workshop aimed at understanding the nature of a problem that is replete with complex interdependencies, multiple stakeholders, and varying perspectives on the nature of potential solutions. Through the workshop we also aspired to better define the purpose of the Civic Innovation Lab- its mandate, composition, activities and structure as means of enabling the private pursuit of public innovation. The workshop was attended by experts including Anita Bhargava, founder of the Let’s Do it! Delhi campaign, Anshu Gupta, founder of GOONJ, Prukalpa Sankar, from Social Cops, Kiran Kaushal from Chintan, and Saurav Bardhan, founder of GreenBandhu. Some of the key points of discussions during the workshop included:

- A lack of awareness regarding waste segregation at a household level paired with unchecked consumption rates poses as the most pivotal challenge at homes. There is a dire need to propagate the theory of reuse over discarding. As a result, there is no waste segregation, even at a basic level, at homes, and there is no awareness of how to dispose of kitchen waste. Another challenge that was brought to the table was the lack of markets for the compost.

- The Municipal Corporation, responsible for solid waste management, lacks co-ordination and manpower leading to a low response rate to citizen requests for redressal and social audits. No incentives for safai karamcharis have lead to low motivation, and sporadic attendance resulting in waste not being collected off of streets. There is no outcome based evaluation of tasks which also resonates in our bureaucracy not being evaluated on real outcomes which contributes to nonchalant systemic attitudes. Tenders and contracts are flawed and need to be significantly more comprehensive.

Advocates of innovation opined that we have come a long way in terms of technology and that it is high time we use it, given its economic advantages. However the high capital cost of setting up for innovation technology systems was identified as an essential roadblock. Saurav Bardhan, from GreenBandhu, spoke about how technology and innovation could play a better role in dealing with the problem and how there are economically viable solutions that can be used to segregate and recycle waste without any government involvement. He opined that NGOs and policy makers cannot solve the problem and it is better to introduce users to the solutions directly so that there is some change.

Another significant debate questioned whether automation of the waste disposal process is the right path of or if the removal of a human element would erase job opportunities for waste pickers who have no other form of livelihood. Capacity building for waste pickers in tandem with implementing technological solutions could enable them to operate machinery.

A local newspaper reported that by by 2020, Delhi will need an additional area of 28 square kilometres, which is more than the entire spread of Lutyen’s Bungalow Zone, to dump 15,000 tonnes of garbage daily. During the workshop, experts spoke about how nothing much can be done about the mounting landfills and black spots in the city of Delhi as they are highly controlled by mafia, often supported by the municipality.

Waste collection and transportation activities are contracted to a third party that runs trucks from dhalaos or bins to landfills. These trucks are remunerated on the basis of weight of the garbage they bring in, resulting in irregular collection estimated to be once every ten days. In addition to this, weighbridges at landfills are also rigged in favour of the trucks.
The three steps to waste management involve a solution, its implementation, and continual supervision. A collaboration of people, technology and data can be a potential solution. Examples including The Ugly Indian Model, IChangeMyCity.com, Data Drive movement in Ranchi, See Click Fix, Fix My Street, and Ushahindi were presented to support this notion.

The failures of waste management in the city of Delhi have numerous environmental and social consequences. There appeared to be a clear need for public education, improving municipal standards, tracking the collection and treatment of waste, and scaling up. Can we not create a strategy that combines public education/awareness (via mandatory advertisements), install more trash bins in public spaces, create deterrence for offenders, discover new ways to scale up recycling, improve municipal standards, create a new kind of electronic grievance registration / tracking system? Each of these ideas requires an approach to governance innovation we don’t have in place today.

The CKS team collated and organised the key insights that came up in the workshop into a process infographic map tracing garbage from home to landfill in terms of rules, tools and players. The activity aimed to serve as a starting point to system analysis. In addition to this, the team aims at detailing out a broader research plan to be actioned over the next six months that will look at identifying key challenges of urban waste management, and understanding them in depth. The outcomes from this research will highlight opportunity areas within waste management that CKS will open out to entrepreneurs, social enterprises, data visualizers, and other interested parties in November later this year, to seed various service intervention platforms, product solutions, and business models.
A Vision for a Civic Innovation Lab

A Concept Note by the
Center for Knowledge Societies

An Introduction to the Civic Innovation Lab

Over the last couple of years, there has been a marked shift in the relationship between the citizens of India and its government. Beginning in the early months of 2011, anti-corruption movements lead by Anna Hazare, to country-wide protests in December 2012, the rise of the Aam Aadmi Party in 2013, and the most recent sweeping electoral mandate all point to a continuously growing demand for an improvement in the quality of governance in the country. It would appear that much of these advancements are on account of a new civic sensibility that is emerging across urban India. Given, that by 2039, 50% of the Indian population will live in cities (MOUD & NIUA, 2011), we can only imagine that this sensibility will continue to proliferate in the coming years.

Perhaps a leading factor of this new sensibility is the way in which we use mobile and social media technology to communicate and consume information. One the one hand, this has allowed for localized, self-improving and self-governing ways of organisation that are often independent from the structure of institutions and politics, as witnessed most apparently in the protests of December 2012. On the other hand, there is a growing recognition of the value of these new forms of communication and information consumption to foster a culture of openness, transparency and accountability within the government. The National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP) ensures that government agencies have a mandate to release national level data using the Open Government Platform on data.gov.in (National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy, 2012). The newly elected BJP government has a mission to set up an institute for big data and analytics to understand its impact of across sectors for predictive science (BJP Election Manifesto, 2014). It would appear then that there is tremendous potential in the use of government and crowdsourced data to cater to the demands of India’s citizenry, for improved public service delivery, transparent distribution of public good, and accountability with respect to inequities in the system.
Considering much of the excellence in service delivery in India has been on account of the private sector, they are an essential stakeholder in unleashing the potential of open, mobile and social data to improving public service delivery. While corporations continue to dominate private-public-partnerships, there is a breed of dynamic and promising new-growth private sector enterprises that are emerging. As this entrepreneurship culture grows and complexifies, there is a need to ensure that the impact these startups can make on social change, development and ultimately public service delivery is fostered and nurtured.

While each of these approaches is valuable to the improvement of public service delivery, it is the intersection of each of these approaches that is most powerful, and that remains unrealized. What is required is an entity that is neither a state agency, nor an enterprise, but one that is able to mediate between the two spaces, while remaining sensitive to the needs of citizens. These functions would best be served through the constitution of a Civic Innovation Lab, situated at the intersection of citizen activism, the open data movement, public systems innovation and entrepreneurship.

The Role of the Civic Innovation Lab

The vision for the Civic Innovation Lab, is born out of an opposition to hierarchical or pyramid approaches to change making. While history is replete with case studies of change brought about by visionary leadership, our philosophical difference lies in our belief in the change brought about by science and technology combined with effective decision making structures. The Lab will therefore serve as a facilitator of an open and entrepreneurial approach to public service innovation, it can therefore, neither sit within the state, nor act as an enterprise itself. It’s promise lies in it’s ability to pivot between the two entities to facilitate new-growth private-public partnership, foster social innovation and unleash the potential of open, mobile and social technology to achieve public good. Three critical elements of the Lab are listed below.

(i) Envisioning New Areas of Public Need and Opportunity

The Lab aims to define and address the public service delivery challenges of urban India, while seeking to iteratively overcome them by opening out the solutioneering process. In order to do this, the Lab will seek out not the explicit opinions of citizens but identify their latent needs and challenges that remain to be addressed. At CKS, we have developed methodologies including systems mapping, ethnographic research and big/open data analysis, that are eminently suitable, and perhaps more effective than any that have been employed before, to identify at first instance these needs, and the subsequent solutions.

(ii) Mediating between New-Growth Enterprises and the Public Sector

The Lab will subsequently identify opportunities for interventions, by describing the challenges which must be overcome to make the system work better at a minute scale, using a proprietary tool known as Failure Case Analysis. This allows for the construction of a large series of micro-propositions which must then be assembled together to create new and innovative redesigns of the delivery system.

(iii) Fostering the Private Pursuit of Public Innovation

The Lab will serve as a pivot between the state and startup enterprises, translating the language of the state to the startup ecology, while taking back to the government solutions developed by the startups. Given CKS’ understanding of and experience with government structures and functioning through the Bihar Innovation Lab, as well as the expertise it has accrued on startup entrepreneurship through the Adianta School for Leadership and Innovation, it is well placed to not only recognize the need for a this kind of mediating body, but also to serve as it.

Moreover, the Lab will provide thought leadership around the use of technology to bring about social change. It will, through online and offline platforms, critically engage with the issues of citizen privacy, transparency, accountability and power. Through these conversations it will develop a robust framework of solutioneering that serves the interests of both the state as well as citizens.

In order to identify and seed these social enterprises, the Lab will host a series of multi-year fellowships and prizes, while continuing to build an ecosystem by collaborating with and hosting Open Data Challenges, Hack-a-thons and Start-up Weekends. Importantly, the Lab will provide a kind of mentorship with insight that is critical to the establishing and investing in enterprises, thereby betting on the most promising outcomes.
An Action Plan for the Civic Innovation Lab

About CKS

The vision for a Civic Innovation Lab emerges from a series of discussions held prior to, on the day of and post the Design Public Conclave on the 14th of March 2014. Design Public is the outcome of collaboration between a series of sister organisations colocated at the Vihara Innovation Campus. The Center for Knowledge Societies is an innovation consulting firm, which focuses on user research, user experience design, design strategy and systems innovation. The Bihar Innovation Lab (BIL), supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, works with the Bihar start government to promote innovation in health and other developmental areas. The Adianta School for Leadership and Innovation, a bold new educational institution directed towards skill-building for startup innovation and entrepreneurship, through a modular program taught by a network of global faculty. The Startup Tunnel (STun) is a new kind of incubator-accelerator focused on social impact challenges in health, education, financial services and governance. Along with housing a Maker Lab with 3D printers and the Bak Bak Cafe, which provides an endless supply of free WiFi, the Campus also hosts meetings of investors and of startup organizations, through large investor events like GSF2014, social innovation conclaves like Design Public and startup pitching get togethers like Pecha Kucha Night. It is within the company of these entities and activities that the working of Civic Innovation Lab focus on citizen participation, open data and the citizen-centric delivery of urban services.

References


Glossary

**AAP or Aam Aadmi Party** a new political party derived from the recent Anna Hazare anticorruption movement. They won the 2013 Delhi legislative assembly election and emerged as the second-largest party, winning 28 of the 70 seats. It formed a minority government with conditional support from the Indian National Congress but resigned after 49 days. AAP won 4 seats from Punjab in the 2014 General Election, of which the results were announced on 16 May.

**API or Application Programming Interface** is the technical term for APPs or applications, such as you might already be using on your mobile phone or tablet.

**Citizen-centric Governance** An approach to governance which is guided by an orientation towards the needs and preferences of different classes and groups of citizens for the creation of more responsive and inclusive public services, especially health, education, financial services, hard and soft infrastructure and government services.

**Civic Innovation** A subclass of all types of governance innovation which address the particular needs and challenges of cities and larger urban agglomerations.

**Co-creation** “...increasingly, the joint efforts of the consumer and the firm - the firm’s extended network and consumer communities together - are co-creating value through personalized experiences that are unique to each individual consumer. This proposition challenges the fundamental assumptions about our industrial system - assumptions about value itself, the value creation process, and the nature of the relationship between the firm and the consumer. In this new paradigm, the firm and the consumer co-create value at points of interaction. Firms cannot think and act unilaterally.”--Prahalad, C. K., and Venkat Ramaswamy. The Future of Competition: Co-creating Unique Value with Customers. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2004.

See also: Crowdsourcing

**Crowdsourcing** The inclusion of large groups or the public at large into specific forms of decision making or solutioneering using public
Platforms such as websites, wikis, mobile media or other mechanisms that allow members of such groups to contribute ideas or propositions and for others to validate, ratify or improve them.

**Data**  An organized set of values or variables that describes a system. The most fundamental and abstract description of a system, from which information and then knowledge may be derived.

**Design Research**  All forms of data capture, research, intelligence gathering, and insight generation that may serve to inform the design and development of any product, service, system or solution. Methodologies commonly employed in the course of Design Research may include Ethnography, User interviews, Usability tests, and other interactive and immersive means for engaging with and observing prospective users.

**Design Strategy**  An overarching approach and systematic policy of expressing, associating or otherwise aligning the physical and aesthetic values of a product or service with the expectations and needs of Users (based on underlying conceptual, social, psychological or other factors) so as to advance the commercial interests of the manufacturers or providers.

**Design Thinking**  Ways of thinking, conceptualizing, imagining, and envisioning solutions to problems that (i) redefine the fundamental challenge or task at hand, (ii) develop multiple possible options and solutions in parallel, and (iii) prioritize and select those which are likely to achieve the greatest benefits in terms of, for example, impact, viability and cost. “Design thinking is a human-centered approach to innovation that draws from the designer’s toolkit to integrate the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for business success.”-- Tim Brown, President and CEO, IDEO, <www.ideo.com/about/>

**Design Analysis**  1. Ways of thinking, conceptualizing, imagining, and envisioning solutions to problems that (i) redefine the fundamental challenge or task at hand, (ii) develop multiple possible options and solutions in parallel, and (iii) prioritize and select those which are likely to achieve the greatest benefits in terms of, for example, impact, viability and cost. 2. A collective and social process, that allows small and large groups to work together in relation to collected and available information about a complex challenge, that can lead to innovative ideas, to new insights, and to new actionable directions for organizations. 3. A process through which the express and latent needs of users can be married with the technical capabilities of a complex product or service in a systematic and organized manner. 4. A set of replicable, teachable skills, which can be employed not only within the private sector, but also within government, within the public sector and the social sector.

**Ethnography**  “Ethnography involves the researcher’s study of human behavior in the natural settings in which people live. Specifically, ethnography refers to the description of cultural systems or an aspect of culture based on fieldwork in which the investigator is immersed in the ongoing everyday activities of the designated community for the purpose of describing the social context, relationships and processes relevant to the topic under consideration. Ethnographic inquiry focuses attention on beliefs, values, rituals, customs, and behaviors of individuals interacting within socioeconomic, religious, political and geographic environments.”--American Anthropological Association, www.aaanet.org/simts/irb.htm

**Failure Case Analysis**  is a powerful proprietary tool developed at CKS, which involves disaggregation of field findings into atomized elements of failure which are indivisible, mutually exclusive, non-overlapping and collectively comprehensible. Multiple possible solutions for each identified case of failure are ideated, following which the component concepts are aggregated and synthesized into new synthetic solutions that are neither trivial nor amenable to discovery through alternative means.

**Governance**  The practice and process of administration, management, regulation, organization and coordination of the machinery and apparatuses of the state. “The word yogakshema is a compound made up of yoga, the successful accomplishment of an objective and kshema, its peaceful enjoyment. Thus, peaceful enjoyment of prosperity, i.e. the welfare of the people, is given as much importance as knowledge, self-control, and observance of dharma.”--Kautilya, The Arthashastra of Kautilya.


**Governance Innovation**  Improvements and transformations in the
mode of decision-making, planning, operations or execution of government services delivery, particularly through the use of new kinds of technology or data in order to render them more responsive or citizen-centric in their character or effects for the benefit of the public at large.

**Innovation 1.** Bringing newness into the world; making and remaking the world anew. 2. The transformation of insight into actionable knowledge that can make new use of the social and material technologies already available in the world.

**Innovation Cycle** A process devised at the Center for Knowledge Societies to integrate three distinct components of Design Thinking into a formal innovation process, including: (i) *Understand*: the use of ethnography to describe the context, behaviors, needs and preferences of users in their everyday environment, (ii) *Develop*: the conceptualization, creation, development, detailing and specification of multiple possible solutions, and (iii) *Enhance*: the testing, trialing, and refinement of proposed solutions through interactions with end-users either in the field or laboratory conditions.

**Innovation Workshop** A specialized environment in which small groups of specialists work together in a highly choreographed and coordinated way. Through audio-visual stimulus and instructions, they create new options, possibilities or solutions using techniques of data review, role-playing, concepts generation, wordplay, note-taking, visualization, and solution creation (among many others).

**Mohalla Sabhas** are an example of participatory governance, initiated in Delhi by Swaraj Abhiyan, pushed as a form of citizen engagement by the Aam Aadmi Party. Each ward has been divided into 10 mohallas, and all residents of a mohalla are members of the mohalla sabha. Each mohalla sabha meets once in two months with the councilor and all local municipal officials to decide how the municipal funds should be used in that mohalla.

**Open** a preface or modifier applicable to a wide array of structures, systems, organizations, and kinds of information to make them compatible with these networked times.

**Open Data** A class of data that is freely available to everyone to use and share as they may desire, without any controls or restrictions. Also, the movement or ideology promoting the release of governmental datasets to the public in this unrestricted way, with necessary privacy safeguards.

**Open Government** The movement or principle in favor of releasing government data to the public for a variety of reasons, including (i) effective public oversight of the actions and services provided by the state, (ii) transparency, anti-corruption and accountability, (iii) stimulating startup activity and (iv) creating new secondary services for the public on account of private startup innovation and (v) generating feedback loops of data that can improve the delivery of primary welfare or other services provided by the state.

**Panchayat** is a form of local government at the village or small town level in India and other parts of South Asia. The word "panchayat" literally means "assembly" (set) of (panch) wise and respected elders chosen and accepted by the local community. Traditionally, these assemblies settled disputes between individuals and villages; however modern Indian government has decentralized several administrative functions to the local level.

**Planning** A fusion of the individual psychological and cognitive process of imaginative forethought with the social and organizational process of arriving and agreeing to a plan. Planning is aided by having rich accurate data about the facts on the ground, insightful representations of that information in the form of maps, charts and other kinds of diagrams, and social organizational techniques which allow groups to organize their thought collectively. See also: **Innovation Workshop** “In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable.” -- Dwight D. ‘Ike’ Eisenhower

**Public** That external horizon which is the culmination of diverse individual, private, or local interests, projects and goals, but which remains superordinate to them all.

**Public Interest** That static, possibly unknowable quantity which arises upon the integration of all the vector forces operating within a society, which represent individual, private, or local interests.

**System** 1. That structured set of interrelated parts or components whose interaction gives rise to an output. 2. The sum of a group of interrelated institutions operating under a common horizon. 3. The very thing we want to improve from the perspective of its users.
**Service Design** “Service design is a design specialism that helps develop and deliver great services. Service design projects improve factors like ease of use, satisfaction, loyalty and efficiency right across areas such as environments, communications and products – and not forgetting the people who deliver the service.” -- Engine Service Design, <http://www.enginegroup.co.uk/service_design/>

**State** 1. A social organization capable of making war, peace and political alliances so as to enlarge the territory under its authority (Kautilya). 2. The ultimate expression of human rationality (Hegel) 3. That entity which holds a monopoly over legitimate violence (Weber). 4. The vector sum of all lines of power in a society (Foucault). 5. That institution which is ultimately and cumulatively responsible for the equity, upliftment and welfare of its members (Ambedkar).

Social Change A significant alteration in the existing social order of a society, which may be driven by cultural, religious, philosophical, economic, scientific or technological forces. It can be endogenous (driven by internal factors) or exogenous (brought about by external factors) or a combination therein. It can be either uni-directional, or cyclical, as in the case of the business cycle.

**User** An individual agent or subjective self who uses linguistic, cultural, symbolic and material technologies to manipulate or navigate the world in which she finds herself.

**Use Case** 1. The counterform of the product or service offering. 2. A narrative example that captures the specific instance in which a real or imagined product or service offers value or meaning to its User. “A particular form or pattern or exemplar of usage, a scenario that begins with some user of the system initiating some transaction or sequence of interrelated events.” -- Jacobson, Ivar (et al). Object-Oriented Software Engineering: A Use Case Driven Approach. Addison-Wesley, 1992.

**User-Centered** Approaches or strategies that focus on and proceed from an understanding of the expectations and needs of the User of a product, service or technology, as distinct from the possibilities of technology, market forces, media, or any other set of social or organizational factors.

**User Experience Design** An approach to the Design of things and environments which seeks to envision how their ultimate User might encounter and interact with that artifact or system; the purpose of the Design is to have made possible a particular quality or character of experience for most if not all of those end-users.

**Visualization** The transformation of linguistic, textual, numeric or otherwise symbolic information into a diagram, map, or other form of graphic illustration so as to express or provoke a new kind of understanding of the same information.

**Wicked Problem** 1. A subclass of problems for which there is no ready-to-hand or off-the-shelf solution, but which can only be addressed through Design (with a capital ‘D’). 2. All complex problems of state and society in which different stakeholders have radically different world views and divergent frames for understanding the problem, which moreover, may change over time. 3. Problems which have no definitive formulation, owing to which the definition of the problem turns out to be a Wicked Problem. “The search for scientific bases for confronting problems of social policy is bound to fail because of the nature of [wicked] problems...Policy problems cannot be definitively described. Moreover, in a pluralistic society there is nothing like the indisputable public good; there is no objective definition of equity; policies that respond to social problems cannot be meaningfully correct or false; and it makes no sense to talk about ‘optimal solutions’ to these problems...Even worse, there are no solutions in the sense of definitive answers.”--Rittel, H.W.J. The Reasoning of Designers. Stuttgart: Institut fur Grundlagen der Planung, 1988.