Japan's open government data policies and practices

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Open data & I

- Research: US and European OD policies, licensing, organizational arrangement (within the government), economic benefits, etc.

- Policy: member of relevant government-convened expert boards

- Advising: Helping local govts as an govt-appointed advisor; helping licensing issues as CC Japan member

- Advocacy: Raising awareness, promoting use, etc. as an OKJP member

What is "open" in open data?

- Other people can freely use them. (freedom)
- Data holder does not exercise control over others' uses.
- That freedom promotes widespread uses and bring unexpected benefits.
- By granting others freedom, data owner in the end get others work towards her/ society's benefits.
- From a government's perspective, openness is about involving others to create benefits to the society.
- No use, no success in open data

Course of initial development

- Comprehensive national strategy mentioning OD
  - sets open data as one of the goals
- Specific strategy for OD
  - learning from experts, pioneers, and other countries
  - specific policy goals
  - initial executive team
  - expert board to consult with

Course of initial development II

- Important early decisions
  - priority areas for data release
  - licensing
  - metadata standard
  - data portal design, launch
  - common license for government web sites
- Mid-term issues
  - legal questions
  - financing questions
  - rights clearance
  - data management/ inventory
  - user outreach

Setting Policy Goals

- 2012
- after the Great Earthquake of Eastern Japan and nuclear power plant meltdowns.
- Power of data, power of data reuse
- Leading to the specific OD strategy
- Goals set as
  - Transparency and government trust
  - Participation and collaboration
  - Economic benefits and greater government efficiency

Selecting a license

- First of the Five Star Open Data Deployment Scheme
  - cf https://5stardata.info/en/
- Uniformity very important
  - so that data users do not have to read many licenses
  - so that combining different data sets is easy
- Data user/ developer involvement very important
  - so that the terms are user-friendly
  - so that the data will be used as quickly and widely as possible
  - some data holders have lots of worries
- Global de facto standard: Open definition
  - cf https://opendefinition.org/

Japanese case

- Expert board discussed it
  - Policy experts, legal scholars, technologists, users, advocates
- Government's first choice: CC BY 2.1 JP
- Next choice for OD expansion plan: original license
  - Some user unfriendliness compared to CC BY
  - Users and advocates pushed back
- Revised original license
  - Designed to be CC BY 4.0 compatible
  - Public domain materials explicitly excluded for freer use

Concerns about openness

- Prohibit commercial use to prevent any unfair benefiting from govt resources
  - → commercial use helps the economy, and one's benefiting does not preclude others to do the same. Let's welcome everyone.
- Prohibit modification to prevent inaccuracies
  - → let's make the original data easy to find and compare with the modified version
  - → prohibiting modification prohibits correcting errors, developing apps with select data, and so many more benefits
- Prohibit criminals' and terrorists' use of the data
  - → do you expect terrorists to follow terms of use when they act?
  - →criminals use roads to commit crime, prohibiting criminal use does not prevent crime. Same with data use.

Many feel anxious about unknown users/ usage.

The real and bigger problem is very often that people do not notice open data, and fails by non-use, not in appropriate use.

Many prohibition and longer terms of use keeps many users away, not helpful.

Select sources available in English

Licenses

- Government Standard Terms of Use (Version 2.0)
  - Example https://www.tele.soumu.go.jp/e/standard/index.htm
- Version 1.0
  - Template https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/it2/cio/dai57/sankou2.pdf

Early Key Policies

- "A New Strategy in Information and Communications Technology" (May 2010)(Comprehensive package)
  - http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/policy/it/100511_full.pdf
- "Open Government Data Strategy" (July, 2012) (OD specific)
  - http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/policy/it/20120704/text.pdf
- "Japan Revitalization Strategy - JAPAN is BACK" (June, 2013) (Comprehensive package)
  - http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/keizaisaisei/pdf/en_saikou_jpn_hon.pdf