

"Open Ahjo" - Helsinki Region Infoshare (HRI)

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Organisation: Urban Facts Department, City of Helsinki

Country: Finland

Level of government: Local government

Sector: General public services

Type: Data, Digital

Launched in: 2011

Link to the innovation's website

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Description

The Helsinki Region Infoshare service provides regional information quickly and easily accessible to all freely at no cost. The data may be used by citizens, businesses, universities, research facilities or the municipal administration. The data gives a comprehensive and diverse outlook on different urban phenomena, such as living conditions, economics and well-being, and transport.

An internationally unique new addition to HRI is public access to the electronic decision-making system (Ahjo) of the City of Helsinki, from the open application programming interface. Open Ahjo has made the system's public documents with attachments available from one source in a machine-readable format. Ahjo comprises all agendas and minutes of Helsinki's City Council and other boards. Now the aim is to improve the compatibility of the Ahjo data with other city data including financial and location information as well as statistics. This will also encourage the development of new innovative services for citizens.

Why the innovation was developed

This innovation has provided a great opportunity to activate citizens to be more involved in public decision-making and urban development. HRI has inspired citizens to use open public data in new ways and create new mobile applications. The applications make public services more accessible and easier to use. Open data will improve citizen satisfaction with public services as people have a better understanding and more opportunities to voice their opinions early on.

Objectives

Develop staff capacity, Enhance public trust, Enhance transparency, Improve access, Improve effectiveness, Improve efficiency, Improve service quality, Improve user satisfaction, Increase citizen engagement

- Provide open and transparent access to the decision-making process.
 - Enhance citizens' participation.
 - Create a comprehensive understanding of the city and its actions.
 - Make citizens more satisfied by providing them with user-friendly applications.
 - Improve the efficiency of city administration to reduce costs.
 - Create new business.
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Main beneficiaries

Civil Society, General population, Government bodies, Government staff

- Citizens: Better possibility to follow and take part in decision-making process and urban planning in Helsinki, and a more comprehensive understanding of the city and its actions.
- Civil servants and politicians: More transparent decision-making process.

Results

Service quality

Accessibility:

This innovation makes it easier to get the information for decision-making process.

Responsiveness:

This innovation makes it possible to create user-driven applications in totally different and innovative ways.

Reliability:

This innovation makes it possible to monitor decision-making process from new aspects, and eliminates possibilities to corrupt.

User satisfaction

This innovation makes it possible to create user-driven applications in totally different and innovative ways.

Development

Design

The idea was generated together with the City of Helsinki Administration Centre (owner of the Ahjo system) and Helsinki Region Infoshare team in 2011. They decided to provide for everyone an open application programming interface (API) to the Ahjo system. The interface <http://dev.hel.fi/apis/openahjo> was opened in spring 2013.

Testing

- New kinds of user-driven prototypes have emerged that utilizes this Open Ahjo interface. See <http://dev.hel.fi/maatokset/>
 - Next steps are to make other data sets interoperable with the Open Ahjo data. This requires harmonisation or standardisation of this data. In addition, we encourage the active developer community to create new applications.
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Partnerships

Sitra

Other Public Sector

Sitra (The Finnish Innovation Fund) represents one of financiers that requires innovative actions, replication and scaling.

Open Knowledge Finland (OKF)

Civil Society

Open Knowledge Finland (OKF) is an NGO that represents the developer community which actively creates new innovations based on open data.

Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned

- There is a huge potential to enhance citizens' participation in this way.
 - It is possible to create a more comprehensive understanding of the city and its actions, and through that make better decisions and happier citizens.
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Conditions for success

- Courage to pilot this innovation.
- Involvement of different stakeholders.
- Sufficient resources.
- Highly skilled and innovative coder(s).