

BEYOND INSPIRE AND OPENDATA, REVIEW OF SOME CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES THAT PUBLIC AGENCIES ARE FACING IN GEO-ENVIRONMENTAL DATA INFRASTRUCTURES

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(Submission #437)

Abstract

Geo-environmental data are at the heart of questions about climate transitions, energy and ecology. Of course, to provide input for the environmental debate, this data must also be combined with many others including socio-economic data. Amid the deluge of data, the ability to have known quality data, discoverable and accessible easily mobilized for not necessarily intended uses at the origin is a condition for efficient use. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to establish “reference” infrastructures providing interoperable data and services. From a technical point of view the interoperability standards are now well developed, their adoption has been strongly promoted in Europe by Inspire. Although work remains to be done in semantic interoperability or of for a greater adoption of standards, most communities are now equipped. From a legal perspective, beyond Inspire, Open Data is becoming the legal framework, strongly pushed by political initiatives. This framework applies to public agencies, sometimes questioning their business model, and then forcing them to redefine the conditions of production and dissemination. The generation of value from the data (and not the sales of data) today is a new challenge for most producers of “authoritative” data, but uncertainties remain about the mechanisms for sharing added value between actors contributing to the production of new services. The ability to generate value also depends on the will to get out of the silos model of most scientific and technical organizations and therefore to develop partnerships for connecting cross domain infrastructures in a holistic approach. The proliferation of data sources produced by businesses or citizens is also a challenge for the “reference” data providers. These institutional actors must be able to evolve their mission by opening up more voluntary partnerships with these actors, and by forging a new role of trusted third party (and not exclusive producer). This new role draws on expertise on the data, the definition of standards, in a public regulator position. This should prevent from the appearance of completely private platforms controlling swathes of geo-environmental information (private data enriched public data available in open data), gradually depriving the public authority to control data necessary for the performance of public policies. This highlights the need for more user driven infrastructures, based on perennial economic models (which can go through public-private partnerships) in platforms that allow both to preserve the sovereignty of the data access and the economic value through new products and services.

Categories

Topic Area: *[2.4] INSPIRE + Open Data + COPERNICUS*

Abstract Type: *Oral Presentation*