

Open Government

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(Chapter 1 & 2)

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In recent years, the government has relied almost entirely on contractors for information technology (IT). So deep is this dependency that the government is in a position that may surprise those in the tech industry: it has no programmers of its own. The code is almost entirely outsourced. Government leaders clearly view IT as a complementary function that can be relegated to others to worry about. Apart from preventing the government from innovating, dependence on contractors also harms the country in more tangible ways. The government can no longer afford to outsource IT. This is the essence of government affairs. If the government wants to do IT right, it needs to get away from outsiders like me and start doing the work itself.

It is now clear why government is so out of date: it is not allowed to solve its own problems, and only relies on people who do not understand the problems. Two glaring errors caused the contracting process to fail. First, the development process is very different from today's most popular software. Second, the paperwork required to start coding takes time and money.

One reason the Web has better tools than the government is competition. Web developers know that the first attempt at an innovation is almost never successful, and it takes many tries before one gets it right.



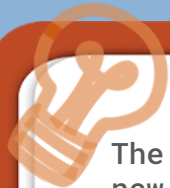


Today's technical support staff sits in the basement or in Bombay, these experts sit among the analysts and are solely dedicated to the mission of the analysts. And because they are government employees, they are ready to help analysts whenever help is needed. Intel technicians soon followed. This is the opposite of what should happen. The role of IT in intelligence analysis - and other government functions - has grown rapidly, while the government's technical talent pool has dwindled. The need is great, but there is no one to help them.

The government needs to recruit the people who have driven the web application boom over the last 10 years. They're young programmers creating revolutionary tools from their dorm rooms, and they're small companies with virtual offices discovering new ways of doing business.

With the increasing number of problems and not enough resources to overcome them all, many government leaders are realizing the opportunities Web 2.0 technologies provide not only to help them get elected, but also to help them do their jobs better. By analogy, many call this movement Government 2.0. So, Government 2.0 is the use of technology—especially the collaborative technologies that are at the core of Web 2.0—to better solve collective problems at the city, state, national, and international levels. The hope is that Internet technology will allow us to rebuild the participatory government that our nation's founders envisioned. The government has a responsibility to treat information as a national asset. Government information and services can be provided to citizens wherever and whenever they need it, in this model the government acts as an organizer and mobilizer, not the first mover of community action.

This chapter focuses primarily on the application of platform thinking to government technology projects. However, it should be noted that the idea of government as part of every aspect of government's role in society. For example, the Highway Federal-Aid of 1956, which required the United States to build an interstate highway system, was a triumph of platform thinking, an important investment in facilities that had enormous economic and multiplier effects.



The platforms that generate the most new economic activity are the most open platforms. The modern era in computing began in 1981 when IBM published specifications for a personal computer that anyone could build using off-the-shelf components. IBM estimates a total of 245,000 PCs will be sold over five years; as we now know, the market size eventually reached billions.

The story of the smartphone platform is perhaps the most entertaining story for those in government. Unlike the IBM PC or the Internet, the Apple iPhone is not a completely uncontrolled West, but for now Apple seems to be striking an effective balance between control and what Jonathan calls Zitt as generativity.

There are two lessons for the government in this story. The first is the extraordinary power of open standards to drive innovation. When barriers to entry into the market are low, entrepreneurs are free to create the future. When barriers are high, innovation moves elsewhere. Second, dynamic platforms become less generative over time, usually because platform vendors begin to compete with their developer ecosystem.

One of the most important ways the government can encourage business competition is not through post-event antitrust enforcement, but by encouraging more innovation. , there are also lessons for the government itself.



In the increase in the share of US gross domestic product consumed by all levels of government over the past 100 years. Governance requires deep thinking about how to end programs that no longer work, and how to use the power of the government platform not to expand the government's reach, but how to use it to better empower people and their economies.

One of the founders of Twitter Jack Dorsey's original design sketch, much has evolved from that sketch. There are currently thousands of Twitter apps, precisely because Twitter's core services don't do much. By thinking simply, Twitter enables its users and app developer ecosystem to develop new features and functionality. This is the essence of generativity. Of course, in a government context.

Data.gov reflects a key principle of Gov 2.0 and other Web 2.0, namely that data is the core of Internet applications. However, the goal is not just to provide greater access to government data, but to build a simple framework that allows states - citizens, not just governments - to create and share useful data.

Design for Participation

In this case an example is Unix as the original design that became the basis for Linux started the philosophy of small collaboration tools providing a foundation that allowed people using this software to write their own additional foundations simply by following the same set of rules that allowed the creation of a collection of thousands of projects different.

Participatory design intended in the government context is utilizing the web or software for real community involvement in government affairs and real collaboration with the community in designing government programs but still following the same set of regulations related to the government. The intended use of software is how someone can create applications that have the opportunity to enable citizens to actually carry out government functions.

Societies that organize themselves are strong units. Many functions now handled by government were organized by citizens themselves. An example is the fixmystreet project which allows residents to repair damaged street lights, graffiti and other problems that are the burden of the government, meaning that with this website the community can organize themselves to participate in repairs that would otherwise be the burden of the government.

The use of software as explained previously can be used to organize communities to deal with existing problems. The public can volunteer to help fix problems as a real form of collaboration between the government and the community. Open software can be used as an appropriate platform for the government to accept community aspirations and organize the community itself in dealing with problems.

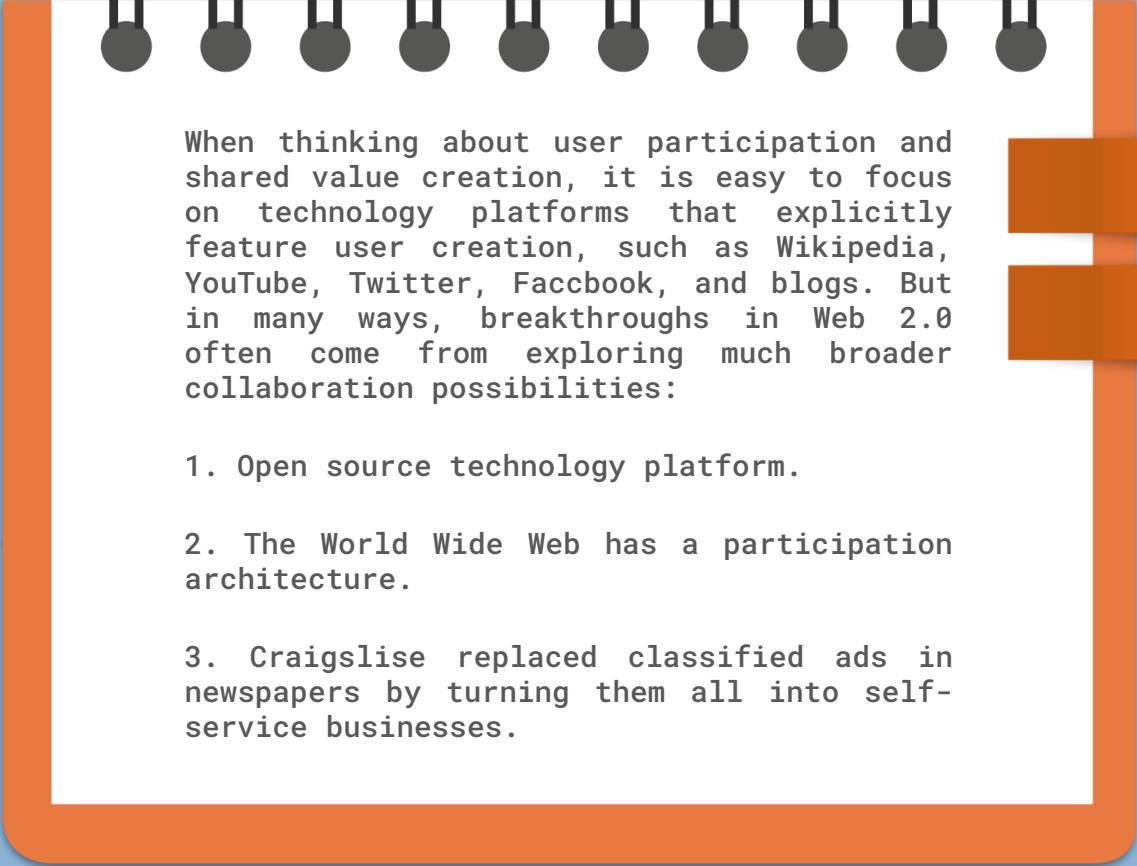




Fundamental technological breakthroughs are often exploited not by their creators, but by the second generation of entrepreneurs who implement them. But progress doesn't just come from entrepreneurs following the rules of new platforms. Sometimes they come from people who break the rules. One of the example; Google Maps, A programmer named Paul Rademacher introduced the first Google Maps mashup, HousingMaps.com, taking data from another Internet site, Craigslist.org, and creating an application that incorporated Craigslist apartment and house listings into Google Maps. Soon many competitors appeared, there were thousands of Google Maps compounds, and mapping had become an integral part of every web developer's toolkit.

This happens because many programmers or what are usually called hackers hack Google Maps data and then create other applications similar to Google Maps.

The success of Web 2.0, where data and algorithms generate value is the key to excellence in today's Internet markets. Nearly all of the biggest Internet success stories, from eBay, Craigslist, and Amazon to Google, Facebook, and Twitter, are data-driven companies that have succeeded in today's Internet marketplace.



When thinking about user participation and shared value creation, it is easy to focus on technology platforms that explicitly feature user creation, such as Wikipedia, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, and blogs. But in many ways, breakthroughs in Web 2.0 often come from exploring much broader collaboration possibilities:

1. Open source technology platform.
2. The World Wide Web has a participation architecture.
3. Craigslist replaced classified ads in newspapers by turning them all into self-service businesses.

As a platform provider, though, it's possible to see how government investment in data infrastructure to measure and report on outcomes could jump-start and encourage private sector investment. Real-time linkage of health costs and outcomes data will lead to wholesale changes in medical practice when an innovative health care provider uses them to improve its effectiveness and lower its costs.

Government 2.0 approach would use open government data to enable innovative private sector participants to improve their products and services. Government it can best move the ball forward by demonstrating in its own operations that it has been able to harness technology to get the job done better and more cost-effectively.

Mission controller Gene Kranz famously said, "Failure is not an option." In that he was right. But far too often, government programs are designed as though there is only right answer, and with the assumption that the specification developed by a project team must by definition be correct. In reality, for most projects, failure is an option. In fact, technology companies embrace failure, experimentation, and rapid iteration.

Quite frankly, this is likely the greatest challenge in Government 2.0, not only because of the nature of the government procurement process, but also because government programs are often dictated by legislation, or by agency regulations that are outside the scope of the agency actually making the decisions. This is all the more reason why government programs must be designed from the outset not as a fixed set of specifications, but as open-ended platforms that allow for extensibility and revision by the marketplace.



Thank You!

Any
Questions?