



Open Data in Wallonia: What is the Outlook after the Hackathon eGov Wallonia?

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UNION EUROPEENNE



Wallonie



LE FONDS EUROPEEN DE DEVELOPPEMENT REGIONAL
ET LA WALLONIE INVESTISSENT DANS VOTRE AVENIR.

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Your Connection to ICT Research

Software
Quality

Internet of
Things

Future
Internet

Information Communication Technology

40 researchers

*Innovative
Results*

*Methods
& Tools*

Research

Industry

2001



*advices prototype
proof of concept
coaching*



Accredited applied research center



- European context in favor of Open Data
 - European Directives
- Development of public initiatives
 - E.g.: United Kingdom, United States, France, ...

→ What about Belgium and Wallonia?

*Information that has been made
technically and legally available for reuse*

(Lindman & Tammisto, 2011)

- Different motivations
 - Open (Government) Data
 - Open Access
 - (Open) Linked Data
 - Online Communities

- Economic:
 - ex: stimulation of the economy
- Organisational:
 - ex: objectives, processes, ...
- Technical:
 - ex: data quality
- Legal:
 - ex: licences, legal constraints, ...
- Societal:
 - ex: transparency and engagement, populism, ...

- Belgian political organisation:
 - 5 federated entities:
 - 3 regions (Brussels, Flanders, Wallonia)
 - 3 communities (Flemish, French, German)
 - Note: Merge of Flanders Region and Flemish Community
 - 10 provinces
 - 589 municipalities (communes/gemeenten) : 19 in Brussels, 308 in Flanders and 262 in Wallonia

→ Disparities

Open Data in Belgium (2/3)

- Different efforts in different levels of government
 - See article for details
- Outstanding project: City of Ghent
 - Open Data platform (data.gent.be)
 - “Light” Living Lab (www.ghentlivinglab.be)
 - Sponsor of the Data Days (www.datadays.eu)

- In Wallonia:
 - 2009: Regional policy statement
 - → Open source softwares and Open standards
 - 2011: ICT Master Plan
 - → Open Data
 - 2013: Open data platform (opendata.awt.be) and first hackathon

Hackathon = “Hacking Marathon”

A hackathon is an event where people in small groups participate in an intensive prototyping activity for a limited amount of time

(Raatikainen et al., 2013)

- Recommendations on how to organise a hackathon (Raatikainen et al., 2013)
 - Preparation
 - Practical aspects
 - Social activity & innovation

- 2 Case studies
 - “Terril.be” (2009)
 - “Hackathon eGov Wallonia” (2013)
- Between case study and action-research
 - Analysis grid used:
 - Issues
 - Best practices for the organisation of a hackathon

Case study “Terril.be”

Economic issues	Any work is supposed to be made for the benefit of the Walloon Regional Government.
Organisational issues	The data reuse is not encouraged. More flexible conditions are applied to some other datasets.
Technical issues	Data can be extracted from an HTML table or on request from a dump database (Oracle proprietary database). The data are of very good quality.
Legal issues	The license is very restrictive (proprietary).
Societal issues	The dataset does not lend to a polemical use (geographical position of locations that are accessible or not to the general public).

Case study “Hackathon eGov Wallonia” (1/4)

Economic issues	Persons from private companies or research centers participated in the hackathon.
Organisational issues	The data was available free of charge but, sometimes, the terms of use do not allow the reuse in a commercial context (NC clause or no license).
Technical issues	The open data portal contains mainly small datasets of varying quality. The data does not meet most of the principles of linked data. The data were published as XML, CSV, XLS, XLSX, RSS, JSON, WMS or SHP files or, more rarely, through APIs.
Legal issues	Numerous datasets were supplied without a clear license.
Societal issues	A project dedicated to the transparency of parliamentary activity won a great success with participants.

Case study “Hackathon eGov Wallonia” (2/4)

Preparation

Team dynamics

The Friday afternoon was dedicated to the presentation of project ideas, after a deposition phase and a final call for applications, followed by a ballot step, then the formation of teams, with a size of about 4 to 8 people. The teams were created at the beginning of the event, informally, in order to have complementary skills and to mix the people that were there.

Motivation

The event was positioned as a pioneer. It allowed to experience a hackathon and explore the data provided for the event.

Case study “Hackathon eGov Wallonia” (3/4)

Practicalities	
Length	The hackathon took place from early Friday afternoon until Sunday late afternoon. The participants who wished to sleep on-site in order to work longer had the opportunity to do so.
Location	The event took place in the co-working space of Namur, located near an important railway station.
Support	The organizers ensure that the event goes smoothly. They help for the research of tools and for the potential problems with the datasets. The representatives of public organizations that released datasets were present for the launch of the event.
Flow	The logistics and catering were supported by the organizers, who also made sure the agenda of the weekend was followed. The participants were therefore able to focus on their work.
Inter-team interaction	The teams worked in an open space, where tables were arranged.

Case study “Hackathon eGov Wallonia” (4/4)

Innovation and social activity

<i>Ideation</i>	The interactions with the data providers were limited.
<i>Nature of ideas</i>	The project ideas often came from the participants. The interest in applications related to mobility was keen (train location, prediction of delays on bus routes or means of transport comparison).
<i>Results</i>	Six projects out of seven have resulted in a prototype or mock up.
<i>Demos</i>	The seven teams were able to deliver concrete results. Three projects were awarded (best prototype, prototype exploiting more sources, the better idea). The award ceremony was covered by the Belgian press (RTBF, Datanews, Regional IT,...).
<i>Social benefits</i>	The hackathon has put together people from different social and professional spheres. Some of these contacts have continued after the hackathon.

- Positive impact in terms of stimulation of public organisms
 - Positive change in attitudes for openness and open data
 - Importance of regional leaders
- Identification of areas for improvement in data quality
 - Need for interaction with software developers in public organisations
 - Co-creation?
- Recurring problems in the choice of the licence
 - Dataset without (clear) licence or with non disclosure clauses

- Helped launch projects and teams
 - 3 out of 7 projects continued after the hackathon
 - 1 of them during two other hackathons
- A second hackathon was planned in April 2014
 - Implication of TEC (SRWT) → ripple effect

*Capacity to locally give rise to
future commercial applications?*



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Thanks

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