

# **Kicking data into gear! Making administrative data work for nonprofits**

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#npdriven16  
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# Is the social sector missing the information infrastructure it needs?

Despite spending 200 billion dollars a year on social outcomes in Canada, the sector is unable to easily answer basic questions like:

How many organizations are working on a given issue?

Which funders are active in a given neighborhood?

What interventions are being applied to a problem?

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# What information infrastructure is missing?

Measurement standards

Data sharing protocols

Data publication & exchange standards

Data intermediaries collecting and adding value to data

Analytic & business intelligence tools

Training & professional development

Appropriate funding for this work

Much, much more...

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# What information infrastructure is missing?

Boils down to:

People

Processes

Data

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## Powered by Data's Mission

**Non-technical:** We help non-profits get the information they need to accomplish their mission.

**Kinda Technical:** We build out the information infrastructure that the social sector lacks, so that all stakeholders can make more evidence-based decisions.

What is one way  
we do that?

**Open data**

# What is open data?

- 1. Availability and Access:** the data must be available as a whole and at no more than a reasonable reproduction cost, preferably by downloading over the internet. The data must also be available in a convenient and modifiable form.
- 2. Re-use and Redistribution:** the data must be provided under terms that explicitly permit re-use and redistribution including the intermixing with other datasets.
- 3. Universal Participation:** everyone must be able to use, re-use and redistribute

<http://opendatahandbook.org/guide/en/what-is-open-data/>

# Why do open data?

Innovation (“[Data is the new oil](#),  
Wired”)

Economic development (McKinsey  
[estimated](#) global market of  
additional \$3tn to \$5tn /yr)

Citizen engagement

Government accountability

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# Examples of how we have used open data policies to improve access to data

Entity data: [Tax forms](#)

Funding data: [Ontario Trillium Foundation](#) & [Canada Council for the Arts](#)

Activity Data: [G&C's - Federal](#)

Coming up: pre-budget consultations, lobbyist registries,  federal program evaluations, etc.

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## But this has its limitations

Government privacy & data sharing protocols (individual information)

Technical capacity for data analysis

So what's  
another way to  
build this  
infrastructure?

**Securely sharing  
government  
administrative  
data**

What it is  
not.

It isn't information sharing among agencies for service delivery

Ex: Alberta Health Service's [Information Sharing Strategy \(ISS\)](#) ensures government and service partners can share information to make the best decisions for Albertans' health, education and safety.

What it is  
not.

It isn't accessing administrative data **solely** for academic research

The [Administrative Data Research Network](#) (UK) gives access to linked, de-identified administrative data in a secure environment.

[Research Data Canada](#) is dedicated to improving the management of research data in Canada.

# What is the sharing of admin data?

Making government administrative data about individuals available to the not-for-profit sector

Sharing is done in an anonymized, secure way.

Helping organisations better understand the impact of their services on beneficiaries.

# Efforts underway in Canada

## **Social Research and Demonstration Corporation**

SRDC designs, implements, and evaluates large-scale demonstration projects using random assignment evaluation designs

## **Public Economics Data Analysis Laboratory**

PEDAL is a medium security facility that specializes in transforming and analyzing administrative data collected for purposes other than research.

# Efforts underway internationally

## **New Philanthropy Capital (UK)**

NPC's Data Labs project aims to open up government administrative data to the not-for-profit sector to help organisations better understand the impact of their services on beneficiaries.

## **Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (Global)**

- J-PAL is a network of 143 affiliated professors from 49 universities. Its mission is to reduce poverty by ensuring that policy is informed by scientific evidence.

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## My question for you:

Who is driving a conversation about this type of information infrastructure in Canada and what will it take to put it into place?