



PRESS RELEASE

Open Data Challenge awards 20,000 euros in prizes to Europe's most exciting projects in the field of open government data

BRUSSELS, June 16th 2011 - Europe's biggest ever open data competition concluded today when European Commission vice President Neelie Kroes handed out prizes totaling 20,000 euros at the Commission's Digital Agenda Assembly in Brussels.

The winner of the biggest prize - a cheque for 5000 euros - for the best application based on open data was ZNasichDani from Slovakia, whose Fair Play Alliance app allows journalists and others to scrutinize government procurement contracts in her home country.

The best idea category was won by Jonas Gebhardt and colleagues from the Hasso Plattner Institute in Potsdam in Germany, with their bePart idea for a mobile app that would give citizens greater knowledge about large building projects in their areas, and the ability to give feedback about projects near where they live.

The prize for the best visualization of government data was awarded to Oliver O'Brien from University College London, for his Bike Share Map application that helps track the movement of the city bikes in cities in 6 E.U. countries as well as in countries including the USA, Brazil, Norway and Japan.

And finally a special Open Data Award was given to a Romanian team led by Vasile Craciunescu for its eHarta historical maps app, which allows users to compare old and new maps, including digital maps such as Google Maps, of locations in Romania so that they can trace how certain landscapes evolved.

The competition ran for two months and received 430 entries from 24 countries in the European Union.

Entrants including developers, journalists, public sector employees, designers, NGOs and the general public were invited to develop fully blown applications, submit ideas, create inspiring new visuals, and open up important datasets to make better use of public sector information.

The entries were judged by a 37-strong jury including luminaries in the fields of open data and open computing such as the inventor of the worldwide web Sir Tim Berners-Lee.

“There were many more great applications than we could give prizes to,” said Berners-Lee.

“With sufficient political leadership, open data platforms will deliver large collective benefits to society,” said Anthony Williams, another Challenge judge, co-author of the best-seller Wikinomics and an OpenForum Academy Fellow.

"We were particularly pleased at the geographical coverage the competition achieved. Going forward we hope we can build on this loose network of coders, designers and others to create a bigger and better connected European open data community - and a greater sense of shared purpose amongst people reusing public data to create social and economic value," said Rufus Pollock, co-founder of the Open Knowledge Foundation.

"The response to this competition shows that making open data a priority is great for innovation, creates economic opportunity and can enhance transparency for us all," said Omar Benjelloun, head of Google's Public Data Explorer team. Google is headline sponsor of the Open Data Challenge. Pollock and Benjelloun were both judges in the competition.

The Open Data Challenge marks a milestone in the creation of this new and exciting field. It brought together key players from the world of open data - from NGOs, designers, developers, and journalists, to official initiatives such as data.gov.uk and the new data.gouv.fr, along with some of the world's best known IT companies including Google, IBM and Microsoft. While in the past open data has mainly been advocated by independent developers and civic society organizations, increasingly IT companies see public data as a valuable asset which they can use as the basis for better services for citizens, programmers and others.

The Open Data Challenge was coordinated by two organizations: the Open Knowledge Foundation, a non-profit organization which is leading efforts to open up public data around the world; and OpenForum Academy, a think tank offshoot of OpenForum Europe, a non-profit IT industry trade group promoting open standards and open source software, which counts Google and IBM among its members.

The Challenge was organized under the auspices of the Share PSI initiative, an alliance of stakeholders that aims to promote interoperability and integration of public sector information across Europe and beyond. This group, led by standards bodies the W3C and ETSI, aims to forge the lightweight agreements and standards that are needed to enable interoperability and integration of public sector information.

For details about entries, sponsors, judges etc please go to opendatachallenge.org.

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