

USING DATA FOR POLICY-RELEVANT RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE-BASED ADVOCACY

The following document provides examples of tools and inspirations for analyzing, communicating, visualizing and interactively presenting data. It also presents projects that have successfully implemented various interactive data and visualizations tools to enhance evidence based advocacy. Although each project is unique in the way it responds to the needs of the local community and specific stakeholders, they are sorted in a number of broad categories to facilitate learning and inspiration for other geographies and contexts.

Links to projects and tools are presented in three groups: projects supported by the Think Tank Fund (TTF) and the Information Program (IP) of the Open Society Foundations^[1], followed by other interesting projects, implemented mainly in the region of Central and Eastern Europe. Some notable examples from elsewhere are included for inspiration. The third group includes links to tools that include examples for various types of data analysis, data presentation in form of cartograms, infographics and dynamic charts, as well as tools for impact and relevance evaluation. In this category we have also added a few examples of organizations known for having created a larger number of projects utilizing data for advocacy.

This document aims to be a living collection of inspiring examples and resources. Given the very dynamic development in this field, some interesting projects or tools may not be included – if you know of a project or resource that you think should be included in this list, please let us know.

1. PROJECTS FUNDED BY TTF AND IP

BUDGET

The Price of the State - a Kit for Foreign Partners
<http://eng.cenastatu.sk/>
<http://code.google.com/p/price-of-the-state/downloads/list/> (code)

Institute of Economic and Social Studies (INESS), Slovakia
The Price of the State enables visualization of state budget, the project included methodology and guidelines for replication of the portal in Joomla (open source CMS) which is readily available.

Enhancing Evidence Based Advocacy for the Budget of Macedonia
<http://www.mkbudget.org/>

Center for Economic Analyses, Macedonia
The website collects the information on Macedonian national budget and presents the data in one place enabling further use and checking of policies with fiscal implications. It covers budget spending within Government, its Ministries, Public Funds and Agencies.

The Visualization of Hungarian Budget Data
<http://www.amipenzunk.hu/>

Budapest Institute, Hungary
The website and related visualizations provide an easy to use overview of the Hungarian state public spending and revenues collected from several sources, according to functions and policy areas rather than by institutions. The online presentation provides detailed information and enables comparison across years and countries.

^[1] Projects supported under the following call for proposals: <http://to.thinktankfund.eu/data/>

MUNICIPALITIES*Municipal Budget Monitoring*<http://ia.podrskaucivo.com/dizajn/>*Monitoring the Financial Health of Slovak Municipalities*<http://obce.ineko.sk/>*Visualizing Local Government Indicators*<http://kodupilt.ee/>*Moje Mjesto [My Place]: Local Governance Data Reform Project in Bosnia and Herzegovina*<http://www.mojemjesto.ba/>**CRIME***Increasing Police Accountability through Smart Display of Crime Data*<http://www.mapakriminality.cz/>*Armed Violence and Injury Monitoring System/Crime Observatories in Bosnia and Herzegovina*

<website not public yet>

ACCOUNTABILITY*State Culture and Sports Grants Database Visualization*<http://granty.transparency.sk/>*(a)GREED - Public Procurements Database*<http://vestnik.transparency.sk/><http://otvorenezmluvy.sk/>**Institute Alternative**, Montenegro

The website stimulates the interest of citizens in the municipal affairs and contributes to the transparency and accountability of the local governments by creating an accessible and comprehensive visualization of municipal budgetary data.

Institute for Economic and Social Reforms (INEKO), Slovakia

This website collects and publishes information on the financial health of all 2928 municipalities plus 8 “higher regional entities” in Slovakia. It enables comparison, ranking and sorting among the municipal units.

PRAXIS Center for Policy Studies / Geomedia, Estonia

The website compiles, in visual and easily accessible way, a set of local government indicators demonstrating the differences in the capacity and sustainability of local governments. It is the starting point to measure the performance at the local level and enable discussion of different policy options on municipal level.

Analitika, Bosnia Herzegovina

The municipal data portal helps a wide array of stakeholders in the local governance reform efforts in BiH. It simplifies access to municipality-related data, increases transparency of local self-governance reform process and of performance of local governments, as well as supports the advancement of policy making processes and efforts at local governance level.

Otevřená společnost, o.p.s. (OSOPS), Czech Republic

The map-based website displays crime statistics in an understandable and accessible way, it informs public about crime prevention strategies that have been used to deal with local crime and also allows public to inform police on places or areas of special importance in terms of crime and feeling of personal safety.

Center for Security Studies (CSS), Bosnia and Herzegovina

Crime Observatory website enables data collection, input and analysis, related to monitoring of armed violence, crime and injury cases. The tool also allows for data dissemination for the purposes of informing the wider public and enables advocacy to strengthen the efforts of local decision makers in combating juvenile delinquency, small arms and light weapons incidents, traffic accidents and hate crime incidents in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Transparency International, Slovakia

The website visualizes the grant database of support to culture and sport in Slovakia providing detailed reporting and comparison tools on roughly 33 thousand state grants worth around 350 million euro from 2004 to 2010.

Fair Play Alliance / Transparency International, Slovakia

The website provides a crowdsourcing platform which brings into one place a bulk of the public procurement contracts which are now published by law in Slovakia and enables scanning and automated notifications to users on suspicious contracts. The website also enables community evaluation of the contracts and a shadow-copy of all published procurement contracts enabling checking of manipulation with contracts which were previously published.

PARLIAMENT / LEGISLATION*The Parliament Searchlight*<http://www.searchlight.populari.org/>**PoPuLaRi - Center for Socio-Economic Studies**, Bosnia and Herzegovina

The website provides structured, fully indexed, and easily readable database of BiH state level legal acts, containing also BiH Parliament information, in order to provide insight into legislative processes at the state-level parliament.

JUDICIARY*Pursuing the Right to Fair Trial: Mapping the Court Overload*<http://www.tiesas.lv/tiesas/saraksts/>**Providus**, Latvia

The project implemented a web-based, user-friendly visualization of the caseload of courts in Latvia. The section on the courts' website was created through a unique partnership between Providus, a think tank, a private company in charge of data gathering and the court administration. The visualization enables anyone to see the average longevity of trials for particular courts, the case backlog in courts across the country and other information relevant for the development of solutions to the court overload.

URBAN PLANNING*Public Spaces in Skopje/Transformation, Urbanization and Misuse in Macedonia*<http://skopjeraste.mk/>**Reactor - Research in Action**, Macedonia

The website provides a web platform containing visual and searchable sets of urban development data, including maps that can be used by everyone (from policy makers to experts and the wider public) with the intent of supporting civic oversight of local government, urban planning and development processes in Skopje.

VULNERABLE GROUPS*100 Poorest' Database (offline visualizations)*<http://www.szociopedia.hu/><http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axAD6sy86Is/>**Kurt Lewin Foundation**, Hungary

The project combines online and offline communication of data about vulnerable social groups subject to poverty, deprivation and social exclusion. The online part consists of a wiki style summary of data, offline part consisted of street art and guerrilla communications campaign including stickers and paint on sidewalks and walls (subject to legal limitations).

WATER ACCESSIBILITY*Open Taps/ Georgia*<http://www.opentaps.ge/>**Open Maps Caucasus**, Georgia

Open Taps mapping website augments community efforts to improve water quality and accessibility in Georgia by putting relevant, understandable and useful data into the public domain, while allowing all stakeholders a space to discuss pertinent issues and to share relevant concerns and information. This project was built on locally-sourced map data created through JumpStart Georgia's national mapping project.

2. OTHER PROJECT EXAMPLES**ACCOUNTABILITY**<http://www.ahalo.hu/>**K-monitor, Transparency International Hungary and Társaság a Szabadságjogokért (TASZ)**, Hungary

A database and mapping of public expenditures, procurement contracts and EU funds to enable citizens to discover and follow the networks and relations between the State and entrepreneurs.

<http://www.nasipolitici.cz/>

Naši politici, o. s., Czech Republic

Publishes information on the activities of government and its elected representatives. Also informs on persons having a significant influence on the formation and execution of public administration in the Czech Republic.

<http://datanest.fair-play.sk/en/pages/index>

Fair-Play Alliance / Visual Business Register, Slovakia

Data repository and visualized data sets on the relation between entrepreneurs and companies successful in public procurement competitions.

<http://www.alesiivoteaza.ro/>

Institute for Public Policy (IPP), Romania

Page where voting results of the Senate are published and analyzed with the help of visualizations.

<http://dotankoch.sk/>

Dušan Zeleník, Slovakia

Visualized statistics of the Slovak Parliament.

<http://expertforum.ro/harta-clientelism/>

Expert Forum, Romania

Map of clientelism in Romania that shows the level of political clientelism through publishing data on national discretionary distribution of budget funds for the period of 2004-2011.

<http://ropter.nfu.hu/>

Hungarian Government, Hungary

Interactive mapping of projects financed under the Government's Új Széchenyi terv (Structural Funds from the EU).

<http://foaf.sk/>

Friends of Friends, Jan Suchal, Slovakia

Social network of Slovak companies' register and various company reports (statutory personell, debts, web domain ownership, etc.).

<http://www.kdohybeceskem.cz/>

<http://www.ktohybeslovenskom.sk/>

Andrej Probst, Czech Republic and Slovakia

Mapping of public media prominence of public figures in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

<http://www.poderopedia.org/>

Fundación Poderomedia, Chile

Poderopedia is a collaborative platform that helps to understand the relationships between people, companies and organizations that make news and affect our daily lives. Using data visualization and semantic technology it shows who's who in business and politics.

<http://sunlightfoundation.com/>

The Sunlight Foundation, USA

A set of tools to improve access to government information (on topics like political influence on businesses, legislation track etc.) by making it available online.

<http://kallxo.com/>

Consortium of civil society organizations, media and private sector representatives, Kosovo

Geographical reporting of cases of corruption, organized crime, fraud, conflicts of interest, and other cases of abuses of official capacity, neglect, inaction, infringement of rights.

BUDGET

<http://www.meieraha.eu/>

PRAXIS Center for Policy Studies, Estonia

Interactive visualization of the budgetary balance between incomes and spendings of the State.

<http://kosht.sympa-by.eu/>

Institute of Economic and Social Studies (INESS), Belarus

The project is the result of INESS's earlier project on preparing a general methodology guideline and generally usable open source code for easy application of local data to create local 'The Price of the State' websites for organizations in other countries.

<http://jan.org.ua/cost/>

Center for Social and Economic Research CASE Ukraine / Institute of Economic and Social Studies (INESS), Ukraine

The project is the result of INESS's earlier project on preparing a general methodology guideline and generally usable open source code for easy application of local data to create local 'The Price of the State' websites for organizations in other countries.

<http://www.fiskalnimonitor.ba/>

Sarajevo School of Science and Technology, Bosnia and Herzegovina

The fiscal monitor in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a service that monitors revenues and expenditures of municipalities. The objectives of the initiative are to consolidate public data through a single platform, to inform the public about the budget implementation at the local level and to strengthen civic awareness of the importance of a transparent budgeting.

<http://wheredoesmymoneygo.org/>

mySociety, International

'Where Does My Money Go?' is part of OpenSpending, where you can find information about government finances from countries across the world.

CRIME

<http://www.investigativedashboard.org/>

The Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), International

Online resource center of documents related to organized crime including court records, laws, reports, studies, company records and other public documents that will be invaluable for journalists and the public alike.

<http://react-besafe.mk/>

Reactor - Research in Action, Macedonia

This web site enables girls and women to register any kind of gender based harassment or violence on any public space in Skopje. By collecting information React! provides a social network dedicated to prevention and ending gendered based harassment and violence in the public spaces.

<http://www.theomegagroup.com/>

The Omega Group, USA

Crime mapping tool with in-build trend analysis.

OTHER

<http://medialne.etrend.sk/vlastnici-medii.html/>

Transparency International Slovakia, Slovakia

Database of Slovak owners of media companies.

<http://www.fixmystreet.com/>

MySociety, United Kingdom

'Fix my Street' is a platform for reporting, viewing or discussing local problems (like graffiti, fly tipping, broken paving slabs, or street lighting).

<http://www.odkazprestarostu.sk/>

Slovak Governance Institute (SGI), Slovakia

'Fix my Street' is a platform for reporting, viewing or discussing local problems (like graffiti, fly tipping, broken paving slabs, or street lighting).

<http://skoly.ineko.sk/>

Institute for Economic and Social Reforms (INEKO), Slovakia

Monitoring the quality of schools.

<http://www.fruitmap.sk/>

Michal Simonfy, Slovakia

Fruitmap aims to map various kinds of fruit trees in and around towns and cities, through a publicly available map. Anyone can easily contribute to the existing map by marking a tree from anywhere in the world.

<http://landportal.info/landmatrix/>

Tactical Technology Collective (TTC), the Netherlands/Germany

The Land Matrix is an online public database that permits all users to contribute to and improve data on land deals, and for this data to be visualized. The visualizations offer both overviews of the data and complete access to the public database down to the level of an individual deal.

<http://productsofslavery.org/>

Tactical Technology Collective (TTC), the Netherlands/Germany

Interactive online visualization about products that are produced in specific countries using child labour, forced labour or both.

<http://www.patchworknation.org/>

The Jefferson Institute, USA

Patchwork Nation delivers national data with local context while remaining visually intuitive for the reader. The interactive map helps break down national data to analyze how it impacts communities.

<http://www.soulofthecommunity.org/>

The Knight Foundation, USA

Visual presentation on maps of a three-year study conducted on communities across the United States to determine the factors that attach residents to their communities and the role of community attachment in an area's economic growth and well-being.

3. TOOLS

INFOGRAPHICS

<http://www.easel.ly/>

Easel.ly

Easel.ly is a very user-friendly system for creating free infographics. You can drag-and-drop elements in the web-based interface, and you can easily change, resize or alter any images to create a unique infographic for your data. Easel.ly is currently available for free use in beta version.

<http://www.piktochart.com/>

Piktochart

Piktochart is an infographic web-app which allows you to create and share infographics with a lot more customization. It offers a basic free package with three themes for what it calls a "casual user", and if you find that it works for you then there are 100 designer themes and charts for paid users. Piktochart allows you to "make information beautiful" without extensive technical or artistic ability.

<http://infoagr.am/>

Infoagr.am

Info.gram is a fast and easy-to-use service that lets you pick from standard themes and add your own charts, data and maps. Within a few minutes you can import a .csv or Excel file to create a visual chart or graph using different

elements. Pictorial charts and maps are popular for graphic-heavy infographics, while steam graphs and bar charts are an excellent alternative to standard chart packages for business.

<http://www.tableausoftware.com/>

Tableau Public

With Tableau Public you can create interactive graphs, dashboards, maps and tables from virtually any data and embed them on your website or blog in minutes.

<http://www.google.com/publicdata/directory/>

Google Public Data Explorer

The Google Public Data Explorer takes large data sets and makes them palatable for public consumption, taking numbers, figures and other data and turning them into bar graphs, line graphs, maps and bubbles.

<http://www.mysociety.org/>

mySociety

MySociety is the creators of websites that give the public simple, tangible ways to connect with and improve their society. As well as offering tools directly to the public we provide integration and development services for local authorities, corporates and government.

<http://www.dataviz.org/>

VIDI

A suite of powerful intuitive Drupal data-visualization modules for anyone to use on any standard set of data ranging from government databases to demographics and statistics.

<http://www.informationisbeautiful.net/>

Information is Beautiful

Distilling the world's data, information and knowledge into beautiful, interesting and, above all, useful visualizations, infographics and diagrams.

<http://www.tacticaltech.org/toolkitsandguides/>

Tactical Technologies Collective

Training, tools and techniques of rights advocates, empowering them to use information and communications to help marginalized communities understand and effect progressive social, environmental and political change.

<http://www-958.ibm.com/software/data/cognos/maneyes/>

IBM Many Eyes

Collection of data visualizations, and a tool for infographics.

<https://drawingbynumbers.org/>

Drawing by Numbers

Drawing by Numbers is a resource on data visualization for activists. It features a guide on working with data and information for advocacy, and reviews of visualization tools.

INFLUENCE MEASUREMENT

<http://www.socialbakers.com/>

SocialBakers

Social media analytics platform which provides a solution that allows measuring, comparing and contrasting the success of social media campaigns with competitive intelligence.

<http://kred.com/>

Kred

Kred measures influence in online communities connected by interests and affiliations.

<http://klout.com/>

TEXT ANALYSIS

<http://www.wordle.net/>

<http://textrend.org/>

<https://www.textplore.org/>

OTHER

<http://www.prezi.com/>

<http://etherpad.com/>

<http://www.freemaptools.com/how-far-can-i-travel.htm/>

<http://ckan.org/>

<http://okfn.org/>

<http://www.cognitivemedia.co.uk/>

Klout

Klout helps you discover who you influence online and what topics you're influential about.

Wordle

Wordle is an online-based tool that lets you create beautiful word clouds from the words that you provide. Using algorithms and code, it creates a design using different font sizes and colors to represent the importance of data or words. Use this to create attractive visualizations for use in presentations or online in social media or other channels. You can print out the images or save them in a public gallery for other users to see.

TEXTREND

The goal of TEXTrend platform is the in-depth analysis of dynamic information on the web for science or business.

Textplore

Sub-project of TextTrend.

Prezi.com

Non-linear Presentation software.

EtherPad

Etherpad lite allows you to edit documents collaboratively in real-time, much like a live multi-player online editor, allowing you to write articles, proposals, press releases and the like, together with your friends, your fellow students or your colleagues, working on the same document at the same time.

Road Distances "heatmap"

Discover how far you can travel on land from a fixed point. Specify the start point, then input either how far you can go or your mode of transport with time available. This tool will then show you the range of locations that you can reach in that time.

CKAN

Data management system that makes data accessible – by providing tools to streamline publishing, sharing, finding and using data.

Open Knowledge Foundation

The Open Knowledge Foundation (OKF) is dedicated to promoting open data and open content in all their forms – including government data, publicly funded research and public domain cultural content. It has extensive experience in building tools and community around open material.

Cognitive Media

Create animated films and telling stories that help people make sense of what is sometimes challenging and difficult to grasp content.