

#DoDevDif BarCamp

Overview / Summary

Canada and Germany are very much involved in various aspects of technology and development. Combined today with r0g agency for open culture, coming from a background in technology and culture, working in developing democracies and open development and Digital Unite, a non profit organisation interested in development and technology, and doing development differently. The genesis of the event came out of discussions with Vicy and Ben – Directory of Internet Centre for Human Rights. The process of a BarCamp is an ad hoc un-conference, you are the speakers!

Canada decided to bring together foreign policy, trade and development under one roof. The Canadian international development agency has the opportunity to create an integrated foreign policy that includes all these elements. We are very proud of Canada's role in international development, advancing democracy and sharing data. Canada not only considers itself a leader but wants to be even more of a leader on the world stage. We participate in open government partnership and offer an open data portal to share government data info.

David Ettinger – Canadian Embassy

We're confronted with many scenarios of development that don't fit this day and age – and we are interested in looking at means and methodologies of knowledge transfer, real forms of sharing and cooperation, sustainability and concepts that go beyond institutional norms.

Development, what does that mean, what can we do, what do we ask ourselves today?

What is open, how can we handle open, all this openness?

Which intermediary do we use to work with the data that we get?

How can we use these technologies and how can tech help us to do development differently?

How can we apply the power and the resources of open data, for example, more efficiently in one the ground scenarios? How can we use the flexibility and usability of the free nature of free and open source software in open development?

Creating demand for open data and technology.

Heloise > I worked in ICT4D for 15 years, and our experience in developing user demand, user capabilities environments which were able to use and sustain computers and so on, huge ecosystems, took a lot of work. But you had to start somewhere, and creating demand is one way. Open data, open network is also a questions of developing capabilities – when ICTS were introduced , there wasn't the demand or knowledge of how to use them, so these had to be built.

Intermediaries / Open Development Communities

There also needs to be a link create between people who can understand, interpret and analyse big data with people who understand public policy and so on. It's a new level of development, you could call it open data for development – in a sense a new round for the stakeholders who are interested in this, be they activists or funders, definitely a new field for development.

Intermediaries - people who can speak data and speak journalists/news nerds - interacting between expert communities and non-development expert communities, being brought in and deeply integrated. Eg people who don't get development but are expert on something else. Learning by failures, in general – that's what development or ICT and open data is not actually doing.

We have already many practicing communities that share open data, knowledge, skills, digitally – that happens already. We're doing development through open design, open technology, it happens.

Open Tools / Open Hardware

Stephen: I would say maybe we are too hung up on that question of the tool, and we need to discuss the process as being one of more open – as opposed to closed or blocked in such a way – so when we talk about doing development differently, it's partly about offering a thing, a box which is open. If you are going to bring a technology somewhere, we do that in itself as a training scenario, so the keys to that box, the ownership of that box, stays with the people who are collaborating on its use and development. Therefore, they can maintain it, develop it, create spin-off economies and so on.

The trickle down process from big to small doesn't happen, closed process and system, little local ownership, benefits of technology stays very limited, breaking open those scenarios I think is part of a paradigm shift, in which often a process is required. That needs to happen more often!

Data Demographics

Including data and the creation of data from developing countries as well. Actually the majority of data is created in the West, by a certain demographic, so there needs to be more engagement with the creation side of data, the creation of cultural heritage on the internet, the creation of wikipedia for cultures and languages. That data is coming primarily from the West, and should be encouraged from all over the world. It's worrying that it tends to be a singular demographic producing that.

Unfortunately, 70-8-% of the world still don't have access to the internet, so they are out of the picture... How can we change this fact – that's the key to the problem, the reason that it is as it is – so many people don't have access to the internet and aren't computer literate enough to be able to add their knowledge. So working in online learning and open knowledge, how do we get to the people who it really matters to, rather than people who already have access to this information?

Computer literacy, and giving people confidence to produce media for themselves.

A form of personal empowerment, people who aren't data sources but could be, data objects. Are we looking at these things the right way? ICT have to include computers, or internet the way we see as web browsers or through apps – voice technology or SMS are as good to break barriers, to give people data or get feedback on that data. Quality or accessibility of data is an important matter. Issues around technology – the cost issue, the cost of free and open source software. The literacy. Infrastructure. Focus on capacities. Technical change and different ways of doing it.

Capitalist Frameworks

Open and monetisation – in a capitalist society, it's sometimes hard to make a sustainable business model around open source. Trade-offs with openness (freedom) and risk. We are used to a model where scarcity makes demand, but also that is changing. So rethinking everything.

In terms of collaboration, development actors – doing development differently, often if you find yourself in a place there is a lot of actors, sometimes they will be doing the same thing with the same people and they haven't spoken to each other – learning from other people by collaborating, not competing. There's a lot of competition for the same money, the same tax payers in Europe.

Shane: We're here at a conference that's called hashtag #DoDevDif and I think it's interesting that we're still talking about the dev part – development is something different in every head in this room. I try to think more about challenges. Rather than thinking about solving development with digital, we're thinking about solving individual challenges to society with these tools – that seems like a more interesting challenge and one we can be more effective at addressing as a society.