

OPEN KNOWLEDGE INTERNATIONAL

OPENING UP GOVERNMENT DATA TO CITIZENS

By Open Knowledge Network

Project URL: <https://okfn.org/>

Project Twitter: [@OKFN](https://twitter.com/OKFN)

- Data

In 2004, UK heart surgeon Sir Bruce Keogh persuaded all 240 of his colleagues working for the NHS to publish comparable data on their individual clinical outcomes – a global first. Seven years later, dramatic improvements in survival rates were reported. More than a third of patients survived surgery when they might previously have died, and there are 1,000 fewer deaths in English heart surgery units each year than there were before.

This is just one example of the benefits of open data – the concept that governments and other organisations should share information for greater good. People who believe in open data argue that it leads to greater transparency, greater potential for scientific and economic progress, and greater engagement from citizens.

One organisation that's working hard to raise awareness of the importance of open data is the UK non-profit, Open Knowledge International (OKI). Established in 2004 by an Associate at the Centre for Intellectual Property and Information Law at the University of Cambridge, Rufus Pollock, OKI continuously develops projects that lead to better access to data through open online databases, as well as international open data events and the freely available Open Data Handbook.

OKI's impact continues to grow, as our ability to compile, store and share data increases. The organisation says that their project, Where Does My Money Go, is the most successful platform for visualising financial information, empowering citizens to understand where their tax money is spent. Another project, Open Spending, is the largest open database of public financial information in the world.

And of 2015, Open Knowledge International had nine official chapters and 49 groups in different countries. Want to know what data is out there? Check out <https://okfn.org/>

Image courtesy of Open Knowledge International

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