

The FCC Dives into Open Government

December 14, 2009

Further Reading

The FCC is in the process of asking the public for a lot of information about almost [everything around broadband](#) [1] as part of a mandate to look into the effects of broadband deployment, and it recently asked about open government. As part of the National Broadband Plan, the FCC was asked to include "a plan for the use of broadband in ... civic participation." While government transparency and civic participation aren't the first thing most people think of when they think about broadband, ensuring access for everyone is an important goal if we want to maximize the impact of digital democracy.

CDT's comments outline the importance of making government data available online in usable formats, so that the public can find, read, and reuse information. We also talk about innovative tools that can help the public take advantage of the Internet - video streaming for government meetings, and the ability to establish trusted relationships online for transactions with the government and others. We've also filed several sets of comments for the Plan [previously](#) [2], emphasizing the importance of allowing users access to the full range of [services and applications online](#) [3] and emphasizing other key elements of the Internet's legal and policy framework.

Even if we manage to make all of the government's data available online, it is only usable if citizens can then download and use the data. Even if we convince (or require) advisory committees to put video of their public meetings online, citizens without broadband access cannot watch or participate. These transparency issues are getting widespread attention with the Open Government Directive released last week - and the FCC will be holding a [workshop tomorrow](#) [4] on Speech, Democracy and the Open Internet - hopefully they will be talking about some of the ways that we can use broadband to increase civic participation and government transparency.

- [Open Government](#)
- [opengov](#)
- [netneutrality](#)
- [national broadband plan](#)
- [data](#)
- [data portability](#)
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Links:

[1] [http://blog.broadband.gov/?ArticleTitle=Public Notices for the Omnibus Broadband Initiative](http://blog.broadband.gov/?ArticleTitle=Public+Notices+for+the+Omnibus+Broadband+Initiative)

[2] <http://www.cdt.org/brief/cdt-reply-comments-matter-national-broadband-plan-our-future>

[3] <http://www.cdt.org/policy/principles-network-management-limited-role-fcc>

[4] http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-295174A1.pdf