Chairs report 22nd January 2024

Introduction

The Chair's report covers the period 1st September 2022 to 31st August 2023.

The past year has been one of growth for Open Data Manchester. Through new partnerships, expanded projects, and community-focused work, we have made real progress in pursuing our mission of using data to drive positive change. Our work continues to gain recognition, from being invited to high-profile events like MozFest Home, to securing new funding and opportunities. But most importantly, our projects are creating impact.

Programme

Open Data Manchester started the year with the official launch of *Right to the Streets*. Funded by the Home Office and delivered in partnership with GreaterSport and Trafford Council, Right to the Streets aims to make public spaces safer for residents, with a focus on women and girls. The launch event held at Trafford College was the first step in a year-long effort that saw Open Data Manchester conduct community-led data gathering through walkabout workshops. These allowed residents and visitors to map locations and routes used by women and girls, to better understand their lived experiences and inform the wider project. Our work built upon previous methodologies developed for *Mapping Mobility* and *Joy Diversion*. Results were also used to create a *Place Review* – a bespoke place audit tool developed with the local community.

The development of the *Open 3P* data standard to enable the packaging supply chain to be more efficient in processes and resource use, as well as reduce packaging's environmental impact, received follow-on funding from Innovate UK through the *Plastic Packaging Portal* project. Having successfully launched the Open 3P data standard in November 2021, Open Data Manchester and partners were awarded funding so more packaging materials could be added to the standard, a data sharing platform could be built, and a team established to support Open 3P's adoption. Towards the end of the year our work transitioned from standard development to engaging with potential users through an ongoing series of supply chain workshops.

From October 2022 to January 2023, Open Data Manchester travelled the UK, holding in-person workshops for the *NERC Digital Solutions Hub*. Engaging various stakeholders interested in earth science data across 12 cities, we gathered user insights to inform the Hub's development. These well-attended events generated significant interest in the project and helped deepen our relationship with the University of Manchester. When it concluded in March 2023, findings were shared at an online workshop and through a comprehensive report, which is being used to develop the hub. The work is promoted as an exemplar of good practice and a model for developing other research infrastructure by the University.

Back in Manchester, Open Data Manchester advanced its digital inclusion program with Manchester City Council. Surveying volunteers in late 2022 revealed motivations and support needs. The project continued into 2023, exploring the lived experiences of those at risk of digital exclusion and designing a toolkit for community organisations. Despite delays, it strengthened Open Data Manchester's relationship with the council. From the development of this work, Open Data Manchester co-hosted an online event in May called *Reframing Digital Inclusion* with Manchester City Council for a national public and voluntary sector audience.

We see our place as a civil society organization within Greater Manchester as informing and advising local government on best practices and helping develop progressive programs of work that position Greater Manchester at the forefront of ethical and responsible data practices. We have a position on the Greater Manchester Combined Authority’s GM Information Board (GMIB), as well as its Digital Steering Group. Over the past year, we have engaged the GMIB in re-drafting the *Declaration for Responsible and Intelligent Data Practice*, been given the go-ahead to develop *Automated Decision Making Consultation Principles* - initially proposed in May 2022, and been commissioned to set priorities for the GM’s Information Strategy delivery plan. Additionally, as a member of the steering committee of the UK Open Government Network, we have encouraged GM to become a local signatory to the Open Government Partnership.

Collaboration

Over the last year, we have continued to host and support the Data Cooperative Working Group (DCWG) and the Design Justice Network for the North of England. Through the DCWG, we have brought together academics and practitioners globally to share and discuss knowledge regarding data cooperatives' development. This has led to The *Data Cooperative Handbook* co-authored with Aapti Institute in Bengaluru and Data2X in Washington.

Although rebuilding our in-person events has been difficult due to lack of access to physical space, we have continued our events program. In June, we held *Data and Policy - Representation through Participation* for an international audience, with contributions from Sensing Local, Bengaluru, and Publica from London. In partnership, we co-hosted a workshop on ethical data with Manchester City Council and collaborated with local data meetups Her+Data MCR and PyDataMCR on the now-annual *Community Summer Socia*l and *Data Horror Stories* events.

Team growth

Internally, Toyebat Adewale, Prisca Munzemba, and Mat Basford joined the team, effectively creating a User Research department within the organisation to support social impact projects. This was in addition to Tom Passmore, Rose Perry, and Adam Sadiq, who work on the development and adoption of *Open 3P*. We were also invited to UN panels and to attend MozFest in Amsterdam, enabling dialogue and connections. By hosting workshops, attending conferences, and promoting initiatives like Open 3P, the organisation continued pursuing its mission of empowering communities through responsible data use.