Presentation by Open North for the OECD's Webinar on *The Ties That Bind: Government Openness As Key Driver Of Trust*

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Outline

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3. Three main <u>challenges</u> facing COVID data users
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   2. Long-standing barriers to data use are exacerbated by the pandemic
   3. It's confusing to access data, especially in a multi -jurisdictional country like Canada
4. Key questions related to open government, trust, and democracy
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The health crisis is a *data* crisis

Challenges:
- The unfolding pandemic exposes critical data infrastructure and policy gaps
- Separation of powers and federated government maintain political boundaries, but also exacerbates divides in data sharing and decision making
- Data and information provided from government do not always fulfill end user needs or expectations.
- Creating a single data visualization for the entirety of a country like Canada on COVID -19 statistics currently requires substantial manual work
- Crises are tied to the complexity of the healthcare system and administrative data

Opportunities:
- Leadership in data **standardisation**, **adoption**, and enforcement across jurisdictions
- Public engagement to help set expectations of data **availability** and **quality** from government

https://www.opennorth.ca/2020/09/01/what-does-the-data-crisis-in-covid-19-reveal

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Open North's *Open COVID-19 Data Consultation*

Call to action: what are the public's data needs to ensure high-value data release and trust in government during COVID? As part of a global initiative by the **OECD** and the **International Open Data Charter**, Open North partnered with the **Standards Council of Canada** to organize a national consultation on July 2nd

- Problem framing provided by **five expert speakers** representing diverse opinions and perspectives across Canada
  - Keynote speech by Mr. Anil Arora, **Canada's Chief Statistician**
- Collaborative workshop with **over 100 participants**, where participants indicated their data needs on the topics of disease spread, government action taken, and the community impact
  - Collected **44 unique dataset requests** and had **over 200 contributions** by participants
- Public blog and report summarizing key findings for Canadian policy-makers and stakeholders
  - https://www.opennorth.ca/2020/08/11/opening-up-covid-19-data

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Three main <u>challenges</u> facing COVID data users

1. Data users want more data opened up, and they want to know when it's available
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"Each number is connected to a human story; a neighbor, a family business... the numbers allow us to understand a range of situations and allow policymakers and all Canadians to address them."

*- **Mr. Anil Arora**, Keynote speaker, and Canada's Chief Statistician*

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Challenge #1. Participants want more data opened up, and they want to know when it's available

A sample of the wide range of datasets participants requested be opened up

Sub-topic areas	• Revised case data: false positives and negatives • Testing those who are non -symptomatic • Contact tracing • Vulnerability factors • Inter -person interactions • Mask usage and effectiveness	• Race/ethnicity • Disability status • People's anxiety • Public transit • Housing status (e.g. homelessness) • Type of housing (e.g. social housing) • Area of work (e.g. tourism)	• Recipient of a government aid program(s) (e.g. CERB*) • Essential workers & exposure at work (e.g. gig economy workers) • Remote work • Procurement (e.g. type of business) • Spending for indigenous communities
Remaining questions and/or use cases	• What are the long -term impacts of COVID-19 on people's health? • Are people getting multiple COVID -19 tests? • What is the role of culture in disease spread? • How is transportation a barrier to testing? • How does crowded housing impact disease spread and impact? • Where are people congregating or interacting?	• What is the impact of COVID-19 on marginalized groups? • How does the impact compare between different nursing homes or communities? • What is the impact of children being home? • How has public transit usage changed?	• Who is hiring? Where can people find jobs?

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Challenge #2. Long-standing barriers to data use are exacerbated by the pandemic

Interoperability	Quality	Spatial resolution
● Common identifiers and semantics for joining data ● Common categorization for variables, such as age brackets, across jurisdictions ● Consistent methods and formats across datasets and jurisdictions	● Transparency on data quality changes (e.g. false positives) ● Timely data that address pertinent questions ● Metadata to assess the quality of the data themselves	● Release data at lower geographies, specifically for rural areas and at the neighborhood level ● Nationally integrate geographic units where data are released, for consistent coverage ● Maintain the privacy of people the data represent

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Challenge #3. It's confusing to access data, especially in a multi -jurisdictional country like Canada

- Consultation participants thought that data should be accessible from a single, federated source, such as [Canada's open data portal](#);
- There should be an ecosystem map of where data is already available;
- Data providers should pre-link data to facilitate its use; and
- Data providers should organize data in a format that makes it easy for people to use in the analysis.

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Key questions related to open government, trust, and democracy

- If open government programs support more unified societies, were these more likely to succeed than divided ones during the pandemic?
- What effect, if any, did open government impact citizens' trust in institutional responses?
- What role did information and disinformation play? Did strong open data programs mitigate disinformation?
- Is the pandemic changing attitudes towards key institutions and systems of government? And open government?
- How have citizens evaluated the performance of their own governments and leaders and how might this affect attitudes towards their own democracies in the future? How can open government help? .

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About Open North

Based in Montreal, Open North is Canada's leading **not-for-profit** organization specialized in **open smart cities**, **data governance** and **management,** and **digital inclusion**.

We drives **research**, **capacity-building** and **network collaboration** across and within sectors to advance the **responsible** and **effective** use of **data** & technology.

Our interdisciplinary **Advisory Service** and **Applied Research Lab** works with **municipalities of all sizes**, research consortiums, international and civic organization, and multi-stakeholder and sectoral initiatives.

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Applied Research Lab

Research Agenda and Services

- Conduct original research on our own and in partnerships with academics, practitioners and activists to develop analysis and knowledge that helps communities address emerging issues posed by the increased use of data & tech
- Advise organizations to collect, manage, analyse, share and use data based on best practices such as interoperability, openness, and accountability.
- Contribute to public knowledge by documenting what we learn during our interventions and freely disseminating our results.

- **Approach** : Conducting applied and action research to improve understanding about and provide practical solutions to problems that institutions and communities face.

- **Main national and international programs:** Open Smart Cities, shared data partnerships, data -driven public consultations

- **Cross-sectoral research topics include** : data-sharing in the performing arts sector, food security and food system open data, mobility performance measurements, smart cities case studies, data partnerships, citizen narratives, online public consultation facilitation techniques

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The Advisory Service

Approach : We work alongside our partners' teams to assess needs, define problems, mobilize research and knowledge, design solutions and support their implementation

Through our capacity building services, our current programs tackle strategic and operational challenges related to open smart cities and data governance

AS Team works with a roster of advisors in our areas of expertise

Entry-level : free capacity development services on Open Smart Cities through the Community Solutions Network

Fee-based services that focus on:

- Aligning vision and principles
- Leading strategic planning processes
- Designing and deliver tactical interventions
- Developing and tailoring operational roadmaps

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