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I. ABOUT

Since 2011 Opendata.ch thrives to make our society more open, innovative and fair by advocating for open knowledge. Our activities cover data literacy, data access & accessibility and civic engagement. Opendata.ch is a registered non-profit association and part of the Open Knowledge Network. To learn more about us, visit our website.

In this year’s annual report, we provide an overview of our activities and operations in 2023 and introduce you to our theory of change and goals we’re working towards.

Data Literacy & Competency
- Challenge: Most people can’t evaluate the opportunities and threats of data collection, publication and analysis nor work with open data to benefit from its potential. This hinders public discourse on data governance and realizing open data's full potential.
- Ambition: We strengthen the understanding of the role of data in today’s society as well as the skills to work with open data among the general public and experts.

Data Access & Accessibility
- Challenge: Too many datasets are not publicly available or not published in an easily accessible way.
- Ambition: We improve access and accessibility to data that does not require protection, whenever possible with an open by default standard.

Civic Engagement
- Challenge: Not enough people are involved in the co-creation of our digital transformation. Those who are working on digital solutions for the common good lack funding, support and access to influential networks.
- Ambition: We enable and connect people from all walks of life to create public interest tech based on an open, collaborative and interdisciplinary mindset.
II. HACKATHONS
We organize Hackathons on a regular basis in order to strengthen open data publication and usage as well as open and interdisciplinary innovation in all kinds of sectors, from farming to multilingualism.

Open Data Hack St.Gallen
(1 – 3 December)

The 3rd Open Data Hack St.Gallen aimed to foster collaborative problem-solving for public administration challenges, drawing in 10 teams and 35 participants. Participants, regardless of IT skills, addressed public administration issues, including optimizing glass recycling and predicting parking garage occupancy using AI. Challenges came not only from administrative bodies but also external sources like a local newspaper.

The hackathon has anchored us more firmly in the St.Gallen region and has helped us to further develop the open data landscape. Organizers are optimistic about future iterations of the hackathon, fostering ongoing community engagement.

GLAMhack23 - GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums) themed hackathon held on 29th and 30th September

The 9th Swiss Open Cultural Data Hackathon, also known as GLAMhack, took place at the Musée d’ethnographie (MEG) in Geneva from September 29th to 30th, 2023. It was organized by the OpenGLAM Working Group of Opendedata.ch, in collaboration with MEG and other partners. In preparation for the hackathon, four pre-events were held to optimally prepare the participants.

The collaboration with MEG led to the exploration of new strategic and thematic areas such as colonial collections, provenance research, and the application of FAIR and CARE principles in data governance. The GLAMhack23 also successfully strengthened our partnership with the French-speaking GLAM community which is an important goal on our national agenda.

Energy Data Hackdays 2023 - held on 15th and 16th September

The Energy Data Hackdays 2023 took place at the FHNW in Brugg-Windisch from 15 – 16 September. In 2023 the energy data hackdays set a new record with 160 registered participants. The event brought together a diverse group of individuals, including students, hackers, and professionals working in the energy sector. Together, they explored ways to optimize energy supply, usage, and storage with digital tools.

The challenges were designed to promote sustainability and envision a future where sustainable energy use is prioritized in Switzerland. Participants, including students, professionals, designers, and individuals interested in the future of energy, worked on various challenges which can be reviewed closer [here].

UPU Postal Data Hackathon 2023 - held on 23rd and 24th June

Nearly 60 participants from over 20 countries gathered at the UPU’s headquarters in Berne, Switzerland. The primary objective of the hackathon was to collaboratively unlock the value of international postal data and to foster innovation in the global postal network. Key outcomes featured a challenge addressing plastic pollution, with a team exploring the traceability of plastic footprints through linked datasets. Another team, led by Poste Italiane, developed a web application enhancing the visibility and traceability of postal items, optimizing delivery routes for increased efficiency. A notable focus was on cross-border delivery security, with a team led by InfoNetworks and GLEIF working on coupling digital identities with trusted postal data to improve overall accuracy and security.

The event’s success was highlighted by the unprecedented sharing of international postal data, providing valuable insights for data-driven solutions.
Open Legal Lab 2023
30th April to 1st May

The Open Legal Lab 2023, a hackathon focused on legal challenges, took place from April 30 to May 1 at the Swiss Olympic House in Magglingen. Organized by eJustice.ch and supported by Opendata.ch, the event gathered approximately 60 participants, including legal professionals, developers, and designers.

Nineteen challenges were submitted, ranging from visualizing Swiss data protection labels to enhancing legislation quality through artificial intelligence. Thirteen challenges were selected for further development. Teams formed and some challenge owners merged their tasks for synergies. Challenges included creating an open-access Legal Instruct dataset for fine-tuning language models in the legal domain and building a «FEDLEXplorer» to demonstrate the use of federal law data in third-party products. Teams worked into the night, presenting their results the next day during the Magglingen Legal Informatics Seminar. Projects showcased impressive progress and entertaining presentations. One team created a Shiny-App for analyzing Swiss Federal Supreme Court judgments. The event’s great success was rightly attributed to participants, sponsors, and guests.

Looking ahead, organizers express gratitude, hoping for continued participation in future editions.


Led by the Federal Chancellery on March 23-24, gathered around 130 participants to focus on Switzerland’s digital transformation, specifically in electronic interfaces. Teams chose from 23 challenges spanning public administration, civil society, and businesses. Recognitions by a selected jury included:

Most Beneficial Solution: «Funktioniert der Aufzug?»
- A prototype allowing elevator-dependent individuals to check its operational status.

Most Advanced Solution: «Effektive Einsatzplanung für Vermisstensuche»
- An app streamlining search and rescue mission planning.

Most Creative Solution: «AI-Chatbot, als Co-Pilot für die Mitarbeitenden der 1. Säule (AHV/IV)»
- An AI chatbot aiding employees in AHV/IV with Swiss German understanding. The hackathon demonstrated practical and creative solutions for electronic interface challenges, signaling progress in Switzerland’s digital landscape. Future editions aim to diversify hackathons and tackle real-world challenges like sustainable development, community empowerment, and education technology. This approach ensures a broader range of participants contributing tangible solutions, advancing the impact of digital transformation beyond conventional boundaries.

III. CONFERENCES AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

Opendata.ch/2023 Forum – Impact

In 2023, the Opendata.ch Forum continued its role in advancing the open data movement in Switzerland. Government officials, experts and practitioners convened in Zurich for a day of insightful discussions. The forum’s theme, «Impact,» encapsulated the essence of the conversations, focusing on the profound effects of open data on politics, science, and society. Through workshops and debates, participants explored the future of data and its potential to improve lives. The event not only showcased the latest trends and challenges in open data but also highlighted Opendata.ch’s commitment to facilitating easy access for all interested parties. This further solidified our position as a catalyst for change and innovation in the open knowledge landscape.

Wikidata workshops Community/GLAM

The event was held from 17th to 25th May. Throughout our ongoing initiatives, attention has once again been directed towards the subject matter of Wikidata. In order to ensure effective participation, a decision has been made to conduct workshops in both English and German, resulting in an attendance of approximately 20 individuals. The workshops were structured to cover the foundational aspects of Wikidata, guiding participants through the process of account creation and new object entry. Various functionalities of Wikidata were also explained, concluding with an instructional session on SPARQL, known for its challenges. Feedback from these workshops has been consistently positive, with participants expressing appreciation for the hands-on approach and direct interaction. We anticipate that this positive experience will contribute to a broader adoption of Wikidata, encouraging more individuals to actively contribute data to the platform.
IV. ADVOCATING FOR OPENNESS

We advocate for a legal and political framework enabling the efficient provision, governance and use of (open) government and corporate data in the public interest.

EMBAG

The Swiss Parliament said yes to EMBAG, cementing among other things open data by default: federal data not requiring protection will be published as Open Government Data by default. Opendata.ch’s team facilitated the shaping of the OGD Masterplan involving users, providers and other experts from business, academia, the public sector and civil society. The master plan emerged from a collaborative effort, featuring two workshops and a written consultation in partnership with the OGD office. Throughout this journey, we explored the present state and future potential of open government data. We thank all those who worked with us to achieve this. Other highlights: open source software, open standards, APIs, interoperability platform, pilot projects, start-up funding to promote urgently needed digitization projects of high public interest. In 2024, we will start implementing in 2024.

As a citizens, we would like to be able to follow a specific topic or parliamentary affair from A to Z. For our democracy to work, we need an overview of the political agenda and how parliamentarians have voted. To build this infrastructure, we bring together people from different backgrounds (business, civil society, governments, parliaments, academia), use synergies and collaboratively work towards an open standard and an open API for parliamentary data across all federal levels. In short: We make harmonized Swiss parliamentary data accessible as an open web service. In 2023, we’ve laid the foundation for the project which we will start implementing in 2024.

Das Geld und die Politik

«Das Geld + die Politik» is a joint project with WAV, Rechenklinik.ch, Lobbywatch and investigativ.ch. The project is supported by the Mercator Foundation Switzerland.

In October, the «moneyinpolitics.ch» platform was launched, marking a significant stride towards enhancing transparency in Swiss political financing. The project is a collaborative effort by WAV, alongside Opendata.ch, Lobbywatch.ch, and investigativ.ch. It aims to demystify and contextualize financial data in politics. By making political finances—ranging from campaign budgets to donations—easily accessible and understandable, moneyinpolitics.ch serves journalists, voters, NGOs, and researchers alike. This initiative aligns with Opendata.ch's vision of promoting open data, transparency, and accessibility, thereby fostering a well-informed public capable of making educated decisions in the democratic process.

Open Parliament Data

Among municipalities, cantons and the national level there’s a variety of different structures and quality for parliamentary data. Way too much data still isn’t machine-readable, fully accurate, lacks proper documentation and is hardly comparable. Political monitoring and analysis tools need to update their crawlers for the same parliamentary websites and clean the same data, rather than focusing on their core competencies. Interoperability across the three levels of government is not guaranteed, with negative consequences for the legislative and executive branches themselves. A data standard to which smaller cantons and municipalities in particular could orient themselves is not in sight.

The Federal Council proposed to change the copyright law to introduce a “link tax” (“Leistungsschutzrecht”) and make tech companies pay for using snippets of news articles. Acknowledging the need to restrict the market power of big tech companies we argued the proposal to contradict the ideals of our democratic knowledge society (access to information, informed debates) and proposed alternative regulation measures.

Furthermore, we were involved and gave feedback to the digital transformation strategy of the Federal Office for Agriculture and the Code of conduct for operating trustworthy data spaces by OFCOM and FDFA.

The Federal Council published a draft of the strategic direction of its cultural policy in the 2025-2028 funding period (“Kulturbotschaft”). Together with Wikimedia and Digitale Gesellschaft, we have argued for a more open, collaborative and efficient digital transformation focusing on data governance and infrastructures.

Consultations

The Federal Council initiated the consultation on strengthening the anti-money laundering framework including the introduction of a beneficial ownership register. According to the current draft, only the administration and banks would have access to this register of individuals who ultimately own or control a company. To improve transparency and impact of the register, we advocated for it to be open.

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**Working with the Public Sector (OGD Masterplan)**

Since the end of 2020 we have been supporting the Open Government Data Office at the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) in strengthening Open Government Data (OGD) within the Swiss administration.

The EMBAG, a law laying the groundwork for the digital transformation of the Swiss federal administration, is going to take effect in 2024. This represents a milestone for Open Government Data (OGD) in Switzerland by introducing the principle of “open by default” at the federal level. To prepare the administration for the entry into force and as a continuation of the current OGD strategy (2019 – 2023), the Federal Council will introduce a list of measures to promote OGD at the end of the year.

Working alongside the OGD office, Opendata.ch’s team facilitated the shaping of the OGD Masterplan involving users, providers and other experts from business, academia, the public sector and civil society. The master plan emerged from a collaborative effort, featuring two workshops and a written consultation in partnership with the OGD office. Throughout this journey, we explored the present state and future potential of open government data.

The first workshop centered on the current state, offering insights into challenges and barriers for OGD. By incorporating and prioritizing user stories, we gained better focus on the problematic areas, laying the groundwork for the subsequent workshop. That’s where we defined objectives and key results to get there. Finally, we’ve prioritized the key results and defined indicators to measure their impact. Based on the results of the workshops, the OGD office created a draft and the participants and us added to it. The Federal Council published the OGD Masterplan in December. In 2024, we will support its implementation.

Furthermore, we supported the OGD office in conceptualizing and facilitating 10 workshops at the Swiss Community Day on Data on topics such as data literacy, data governance and more.
V. FOSTERING PUBLIC INTEREST TECH WITH THE PROTOTYPE FUND

The Prototype Fund, an initiative by Opendata.ch, has been championing technological innovations aimed at addressing societal needs since 2020. With an emphasis on open source projects, the program provides a fertile ground for developers and teams to bring their ideas for public interest tech projects from concept to prototype.

Developers or teams of technically skilled, politically engaged and creative collaborators, can receive up to CHF 100,000.-. In addition, they receive coaching, consulting and are connected with the tech and other communities.

Since 2020 the Prototype Fund supported 16 teams and projects. The third funding round ended in February 2023 with a Demo Day. Several projects from the third funding round were able to grow after finishing the Prototype Fund program. “Climate Gains” for example was invited to present their work on the COP28 in Dubai. The third funding round concluded three year’s of exclusive support by the Mercator Foundation.

However, the Foundation will continue to support our program: for a period of three years, they will not only cover the organizational overhead of the program but also sponsor two projects in the realm of digital sufficiency.

Thus, from 2024, the fund commits to annually supporting two projects specifically focused on the topic of digital sufficiency, demonstrating a commitment to sustainable and responsible technology use over a three-year horizon.

In 2023 the Prototype Fund actively sought to broaden its impact by reaching out to other foundations, organizations and enterprises. By inviting them to collaborate, the Prototype Fund aims to leverage its unique approach to further missions focused on experimentation and public interest technology development. This strategy of partnership and collaboration is aimed at consolidating the Prototype Fund approach as a crucial experimental space for open public interest tech innovation in Switzerland, encouraging a wide array of stakeholders to contribute to the common good.

THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS IN A PROTOTYPE FUND ROUND:
VI. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Balance sheet / Budget 2023

Link to the document: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1c7FDcUhVTIFnAn_HZAulD6j01tBkasV/view?usp=sharing

Annual financial statements

Link to the document: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vaqXObc78bhEMOsglew3Rf3k8f04/view?usp=sharing

VII. FUTURE OUTLOOK

Strategy 2024 – 2027

The last strategy of Opendata.ch was finalized in 2019 so it was about time to renew it. During the year 2023, the newly constituted board analyzed the previous strategy in an iterative process during several workshops; together they identified what to continue, what to adjust, omit or add. After implementing these results in an updated strategy, the authors invited the newly created advisory board to give feedback and contribute further inputs and ideas to the new version of the strategy.

After these discussions, the office has always taken over to formulate a new draft. The result is now available and describes in three impact goals what opendata.ch aims to achieve in the next four years.

VIII. OUR ORGANISATION

Team

Florin Hasler, 80%, Director
Gaston Wey, 80%, Project Manager
Albertina Luisier, 60%, Project Manager
Christian Hansen, Program Lead Prototype Fund (60%)

Our Members

At the end of 2023 we had more than 240 individual members, 29 institutional members and 25 Friends of OpenGLAM (individual and institutional). Thank you for your continued support!

Our Board

Andreas Kellerhals
Matteo Cacciarelo
Beat Estermann
Oleg Lavrovsy
Clara Esteve
Andrina Frey
Juan Pablo Lovato
Andrea Scheller
Anne Wegmann.

Advisory Board:

André Golliez
Andreas Amsler
Christian Trachsel
Dominik Sievi
Matthias Stümer
Flurina Wäspi
Hannes Gassert
Jean-Luc Cochard
Jonas Lendenmann
Jonas Racine
Lorenzo Niola
Moritz Mähr
Rahel Ryf
Tobias Naef
Lionel Walter
Institutional Members of Opendata.ch:

- Adjumed Services AG
- Bundesamt für Statistik
- EBP Schweiz AG
- FEINHEIT GmbH
- Forschungsstelle Digitale Nachhaltigkeit
- HES-SO Valais
- Hochschule Luzern
- inNET Umweltmonitoring
- Interactive Things GmbH
- Liip AG
- Neteo
- Open Network Infrastructure Association
- Public Eye
- Puzzle ITC GmbH
- Cividi GmbH
- Stadt St. Gallen
- Statistik Stadt Zürich
- Statistisches Amt des Kantons Basel-Stadt
- SWI swissinfo.ch
- SWITCH
- Tegonal GmbH
- Verein Lobbywatch.ch
- VSHN AG
- Zetamind AG
- Kanton Zug

Friends of OpenGLAM:

- ETH Bibliothek
- infoclio.ch
- Museum für Kommunikation
- Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv
- Schweizerisches Nationalbibliothek
- Schweizerisches Nationalmuseum
- Schweizerisches Sozialarchiv
- Schweizerische Stiftung für die Geschichte der Post
- Wikimedia CH

IX. RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION

To our amazing members, volunteers, and partners at Opendata.ch, you’re the heartbeat of our data-driven purpose. Your passion, dedication, and collaborative spirit have powered our mission to create an open, innovative, and fair society. Whether you’ve coded, brainstormed, or simply cheered us on, you’ve made a tangible impact. Your collaboration has powered our data engines, fueled our hackathons, and made our annual forum a highlight of the year!

X. SUPPORT US AND OPEN KNOWLEDGE IN SWITZERLAND

Become a member or donate to join our cause and support our work! Sign up for our newsletter and follow us on Mastodon, Twitter, and LinkedIn to follow our activities.

If you have any feedback or questions, please get in touch with Florin.