Open Governance

Open governance is a political ideology which promotes the application of open source and open content to the everyday practices of democratic governance. An example is legislation that is open to the general public: this openness allows citizens to express their views on the government directly and in large numbers, and the collection of their opinions benefits policy and those who implement it, the lawmakers, because they can base their decision-making on a wide range of tangible and specific data ([4]). These views, moreover, can suggest many different approaches of how open governance can merge with actual government. A most crucial factor though concerns how to process successfully vast amount of information within an open source environment ([5]).

Open Governance in Greece

Few days after the Greek parliamentary elections of the 4th of October 2009 the newly elected socialist government launched the Greek OpenGov.gr initiative. The idea was to render OpenGov.gr a major reference point to Greek public sphere, a “virtual” meeting point for the government and the public. Some early initiatives included open calls for the filling of governmental posts and for participation in commentary forums formed in order to discuss and deliberate online over proposed legislation. It received major publicity since it was the first time in Greece that software tools and the Internet were openly offered at a large scale to the public for direct interaction with the government. In a society that only 18,3% of the population have advanced or good Internet skills this initiative generated remarkable media attention. This led to an unexpectedly large civic participation: on-line applications for certain positions or comments on legislation sometimes numbered several thousand. An interesting similar initiative is Labs.OpenGov.gr. This is an open innovation contest for the redesign of electronic government services. The response from the public was remarkable and the 15 best proposals that received top ranking are under consideration for adoption by the Greek e-state. The socialist party now in government has been engaging in a number of similar projects for a long time, while still in opposition ([2]).

OpenGov.gr initiative has generated considerable interest as this is evidenced by the steady publicity it has been receiving in the media, electronic and print, and in an assortment of political information sources. It is obvious that OpenGov.gr is a top-down approach to open e-government since it is headquartered in the offices of the Prime minister.

Bibliography


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