azavea

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Azavea Releases Source Code for OpenDataPhilly.org To Enable Municipalities and Open Government Groups to Create Their Own Open Data Catalogs

The Open Source Code, Named 'Open Data Catalog' is Now Available on GitHub.com

Philadelphia, PA, June 30, 2011 – In April, Azavea, a geospatial analysis (GIS) software development company announced the launch of OpenDataPhilly.org (http://opendataphilly.org/), a Philadelphia-centric catalog of online data, applications and APIs. Today, Azavea announces that the code of the OpenDataPhilly.org project is now available as open source software under the name Open Data Catalog, and is freely available for anyone to use at: https://github.com/azavea/Open-Data-Catalog

While a multitude of government agencies, non-profit organizations, and academic institutions throughout the world have assembled data pertaining to their activities and the communities they serve, these datasets exist in disparate formats and locations. For people interested in using this data, the search can be like finding a needle in a haystack. OpenDataPhilly.org, a collaborative effort between Technically Philly, WHYY Radio, the City of Philadelphia's Open Access Philly task force, and Azavea was launched to connect people with data pertaining to the Philadelphia region. The initial version of the database encompasses a catalog of over 100 datasets providing information about zoning, mortgages and deeds, campaign finance records, polling places, locations of schools and libraries, bicycle networks, crime, local and regional train routes, and many other metrics about the Philadelphia region.

Written using Django, Python and PostgreSQL, Open Data Catalog is intended to display information and links to publicly available data in an easily searchable format. The code also includes options for data owners to submit datasets for consideration, for registered public users to request datasets that do not currently exist, and vote on their favorites. Open Data Catalog is free for anyone or any agency to use. For what purpose? Government agencies are increasingly turning to the Internet as a way to share operational data, which, in turn is being shared, repurposed and published in new forms by others. Projects such as Data.gov, Data.london.gov.uk, The World Bank, Openly Local, Toronto.ca/open and NYC Data Mine have raised the bar in terms of what the public should expect from a transparent government.

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These projects have made it evident that government transparency is not just about giving access to data, but it is also about being able to share, reuse and transform this data in order for people to analyze and understand it better. It is Azavea's hope that Open Data Catalog will be used to make this process easier to a broader range of agencies, organizations and citizens.

"Raw data is not meaningful on its own. With Open Data Catalog, we want to encourage organizations or municipalities to build their own catalogs in order to enable technology communities throughout the world to transform rows of text, numbers and shapes into applications and visualizations that inform the public, inspire action, and contribute to more dynamic communities," says Robert Cheetham, President and CEO of Azavea.

About Azavea

Azavea is an award-winning geospatial analysis (GIS) software development firm specializing in the creation of location-based web and mobile software as well as geospatial analysis services. Azavea is a certified B Corporation that applies geographic data and technology to promote the emergence of more dynamic, vibrant, and sustainable communities. Each of Azavea's projects, products and pro bono engagements showcases this commitment. For more information, visit http://www.azavea.com.

If you would like more information about Azavea or to schedule an interview with Robert Cheetham, Azavea CEO and President, please contact Abby Fretz at (215) 701 – 7503 or e-mail afretz@azavea.com.

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