

The Drama of the Community Resource Data Commons

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Community Resource Directory Data

What is it:

- **What services** are available?

Health

Human

Social

Some Federal/State

Some Local/County

Mostly non-profit

- **Who** is eligible for them?

- **How, where, and when** can one access them?

Community Resource Directory Data

A wicked little problem

Complex:

- Organizations -> Services -> Sites
- Elaborate requirements (gender, family size, income, etc)

Semantic Variability: similar services described in different ways by different people in different places

Entropic: services change often (funding shifts, staff leaves, etc)

No common reporting mechanism

Mostly non-government.

Information and Referral (I&R)

- Aggregate **information**, provide **referrals**
- Started in libraries in early 20th century
- Alliance of Information and Referral Systems forms in 1970's – today reps more than 1k "I&R"
- 2-1-1 emerged in mid-90s



2-1-1: the Information-and-Referral Legacy

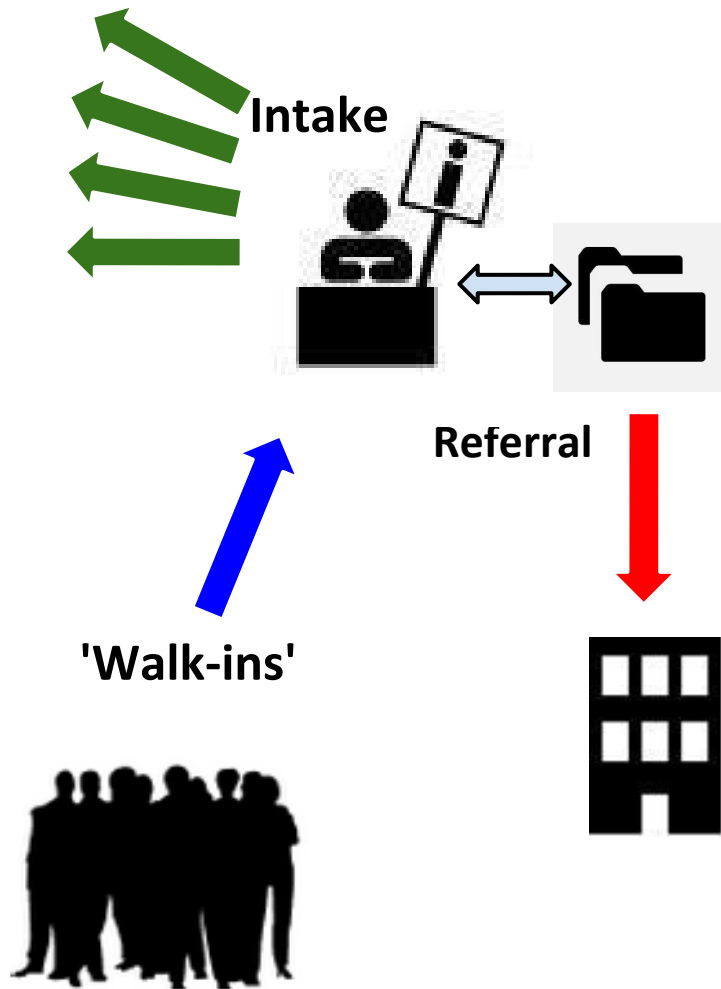


- **Calling centers** - almost 250 in North America
- **Localized** (city and county)
- **Decentralized** (each independent)
- Often run by or funded by **United Way**
- **Closed platforms** – consumer service or pay-for-data
- Some **services** such as enrollment, case management

The District of Columbia:

- “Worst” 2-1-1, period.
- Government took it over in 2004
- Ran it... into the ground
- Part of the 3-1-1 Calling system, but... Never updated the data.

FOOD
CLOTHING
MEDICAL
services
LEGAL
services
SOCIAL
services
ADVOCACY



Community produced Resource Directories:

At Bread for the City:
2 out of 3 “walk-ins” just
get referred elsewhere.

Lots of time and energy
spent managing
information.

Community-Driven web-based I&R projects

DC Food Finder



Welcome to the DC Food Finder:
An Interactive Map of Food Resources in D
Project of Healthy Affordable Food For All

Get Started Now:

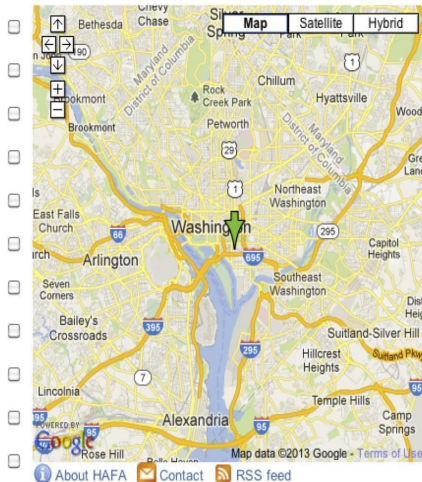
* Simply click the box next to the resource you're looking for and type an address in the search bar.

1 Select Resources

- ☐ Grocery Store
- ☐ Free Meals
- ☐ Emergency Groceries
- ☐ Food for Seniors and Homebound
- ☐ APPLY! for Food Benefits
- ☐ Low Cost Groceries
- ☐ Farmers Markets
- ☐ Free Summer Meals
- ☐ Community Gardens and Urban Food Projects
- ☐ Nutrition and Cooking Classes
- ☐ Referrals

2 Enter an Address to Find Nearest Food Options

Enter address to find nearest food option
(e.g. 738 7th st se, washington dc; ward 8; etc.)



BRIDGE Project



Connect to Social Services, Volunteer and Research Opportunities in the DC Area.
Type the name or service you are seeking to search DC nonprofits and agencies.

What are you looking for?

Follow @bridg

Home Campus-Community Collaborations Services by Type Suggest a Service Blog Contact Mission Statement

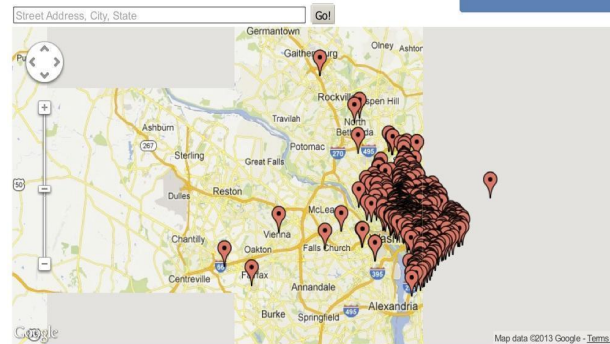
The BRIDGE Project seeks to provide an up-to-date and comprehensive guide to social services and public resources in the District of Columbia.

Search for Services

Volunteer Opportunities

Research Opportunities

Type your address in the box below to search for services near you!



THE BRIDGE PROJECT | Home | Home | Services by Type | Suggest a Service | Visit our Blog | Contact Us | Mission Statement

Open 211



Assistance is also available through the Capital Area Food Bank Hunger Lifeline at 202-644-9807.

Powered by Social Compact, Inc. © 2008

“Open” Civic Technology: Open211 vs Open311

Open311: Success

- **311**: municipal service requests
- **Open311** = a set of standards and protocols
- “**Government as platform**”
- External applications can **read from and even write to** a city’s service request system.
- See: **SeeClickFix**, other apps.

Open211: FAIL

- **211**: data on decentralized social sector, not one gov system
- 2-1-1s are mostly private **501c3s**
- **2-1-1s don’t want to be open.**
Data = competitive advantage (?)
- “**The crowd**” isn’t great at **generating this data.** It’s obscure, complex, and sensitive.

Vendors flooding the space:



Vendors:

Pros:

- Innovative, service-oriented features
- User-friendly design
- Both long overdue!

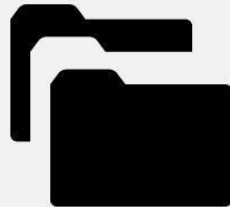
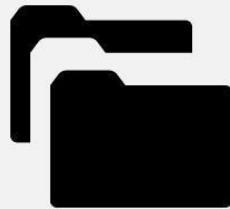
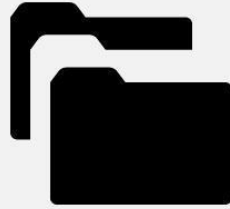
Cons:

- Each vendor creates their own database, treats data as competitive advantage
- More privatization and fragmentation!

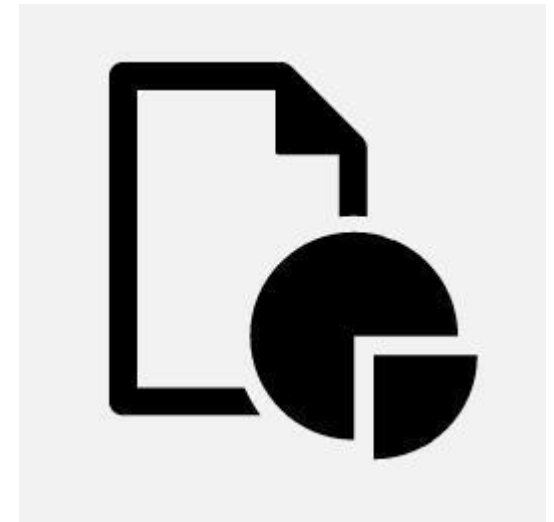
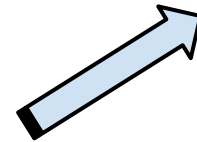
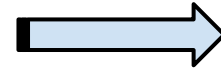
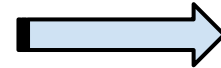
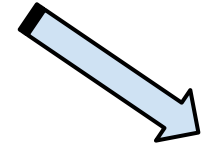
Building the *best system*.

Vs.

Developing a healthy *ecosystem*.



STEP 1: MERGE THE DATA

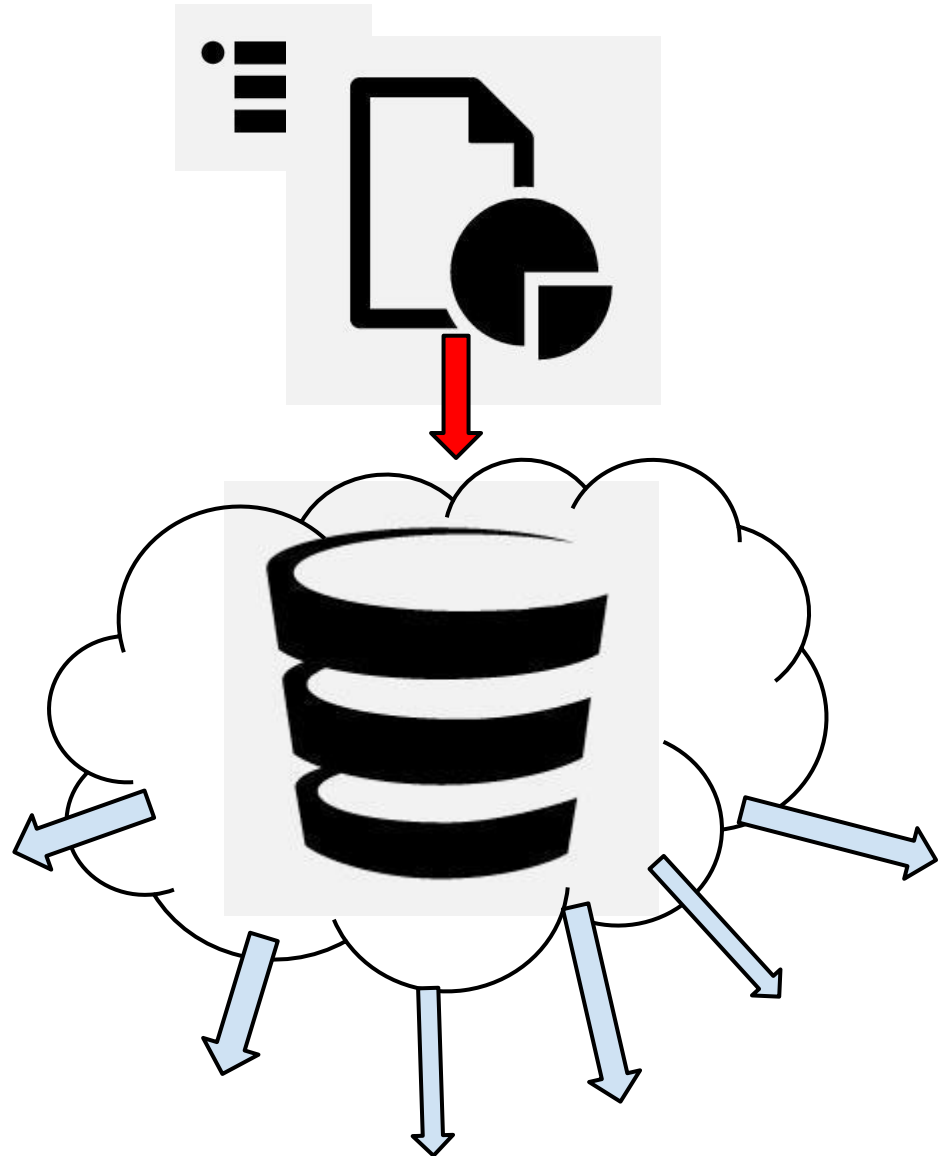


**UNIQUE ID for every
service, to be
recognized by every
database.**

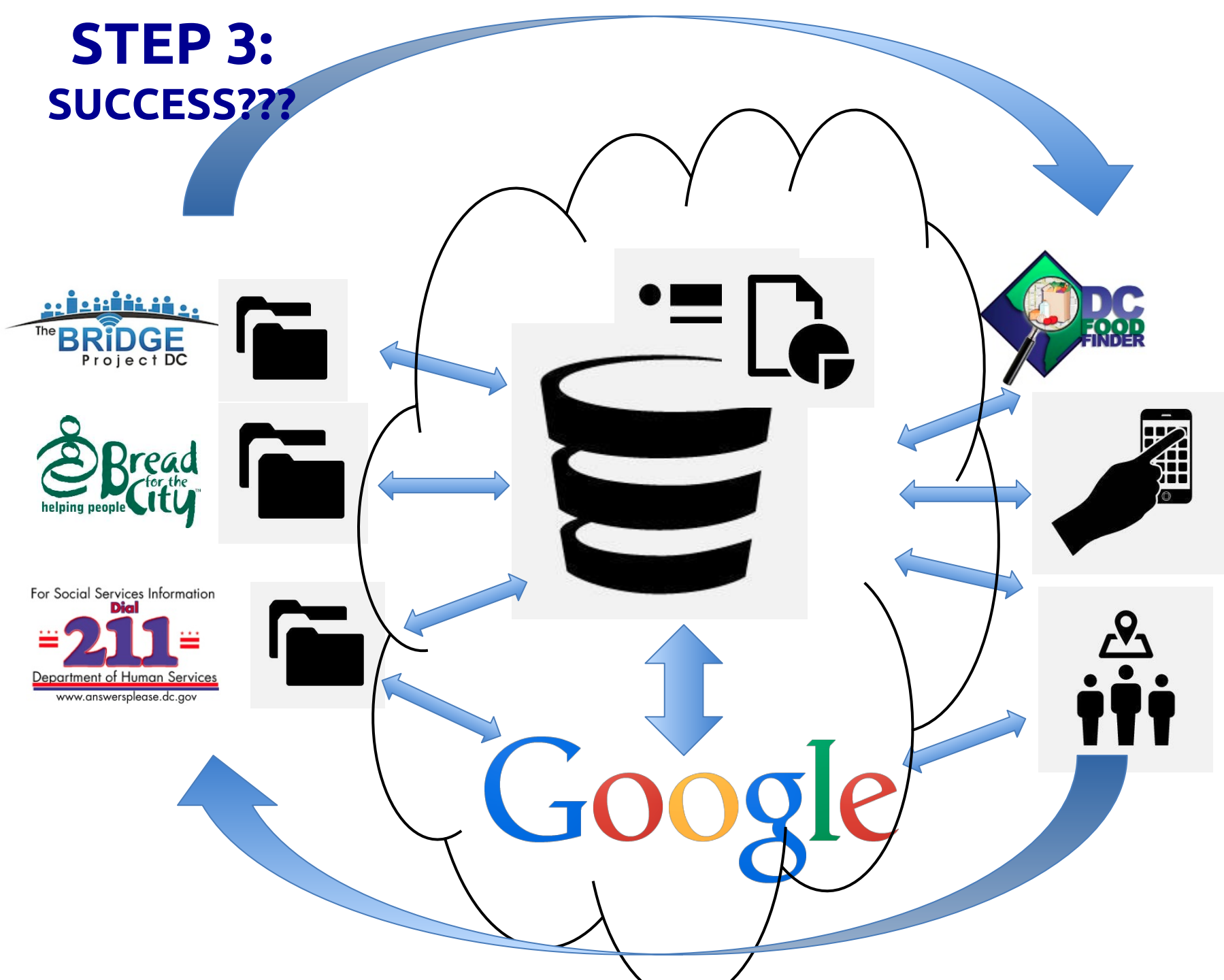
STEP 2:

Open the DATA COMMONS

Host the data in a
cloud-based data
catalogue with Open
API (Application
Programming
Interface)



STEP 3: SUCCESS???



What we need to build an ‘open resource directory’:

- Common structure (**schema**) to describe servs
- Classification method (**tagsonomy**) to ordering different types of organizations
- **APIs** to expose and receive it

Technical stuff	Purpose	Opportunity
Schema	Structuring	AIRS/W3C
Taxonomy	Sorting	211/Open Eligibility
API	Circulating	Ohana

API - Ohanapi.org

Produced by Code for America's 2013 fellows.
For San Mateo County in California.



Ohana API—An open directory of services

The Ohana API aims to provide a read/write database of community organizations & services.

- ★ Free and open source
- ★ Targeted search for human services
- ★ Centralized data

Taxonomy:

System of classification

All 2-1-1 services use same taxonomy. Massive -- 10,000 terms!

The taxonomy is **owned by LA211**. Licensed by **Alliance for Information & Referral Systems (AIRS)**

Proprietary: this is all you are allowed to see of it without paying for it.



- B Basic Needs
 - BD Food
 - BD-1500 Community Wide Food Storage Facilities
 - BD-1800 Emergency Food
 - BD-1800.1000 Brown Bag Food Programs
 - BD-1800.1900 Food Lines
 - BD-1800.2000 Food Pantries
 - BD-1800.2000-620 Occasional Emergency Food Assistance
 - BD-1800.2000-640 Ongoing Emergency Food Assistance
 - BD-1800.2250 Food Vouchers
 - BD-1800.2500 Government Surplus Food Distribution Sites
 - BD-1800.8000 Sack Lunches/Dinners
 - + BD-1800.8200 Specialty Food Providers
 - BD-1850 Emergency Food Clearinghouses
 - BD-2000 Food Banks/Food Distribution Warehouses
 - + BD-2400 Food Outlets
 - + BD-2600 Food Production
 - BD-2700 Food Rescue Programs
 - BD-2900 Grocery Delivery
 - + BD-5000 Meals
 - + BH Housing/Shelter
 - + BM Material Goods
 - + BT Transportation
 - + BV Utilities
- + D Consumer Services
- + F Criminal Justice and Legal Services
- + H Education
- + J Environmental Quality
- + L Health Care
- + N Income Support and Employment
- + P Individual and Family Life
- + R Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
- + T Organizational/Community/International Services
- + Y Target Populations

A semantic taxonomy in Creative Commons:



[WELCOME](#) [HUMAN SERVICES](#) [HUMAN SITUATIONS](#) [GLOSSARY](#) [THE CODE](#) [FAQS](#)

A HUMAN SERVICE TAXONOMY

The Open Eligibility Project is a collaborative for a better human service taxonomy. The taxonomy is a simple way to categorize human services and human situations. With these common categories, we, as service providers, navigators, and people in need, can find human services quickly and easily.



Schema.org: ‘Civic Services Schema’

“A new vocabulary... has been proposed to improve search engines’ understanding of these services. It is intended to provide enough information to determine the service, the area covered by the service, and relevant information for using the service.” <http://blog.schema.org/>



Diff schemas for diff purposes:

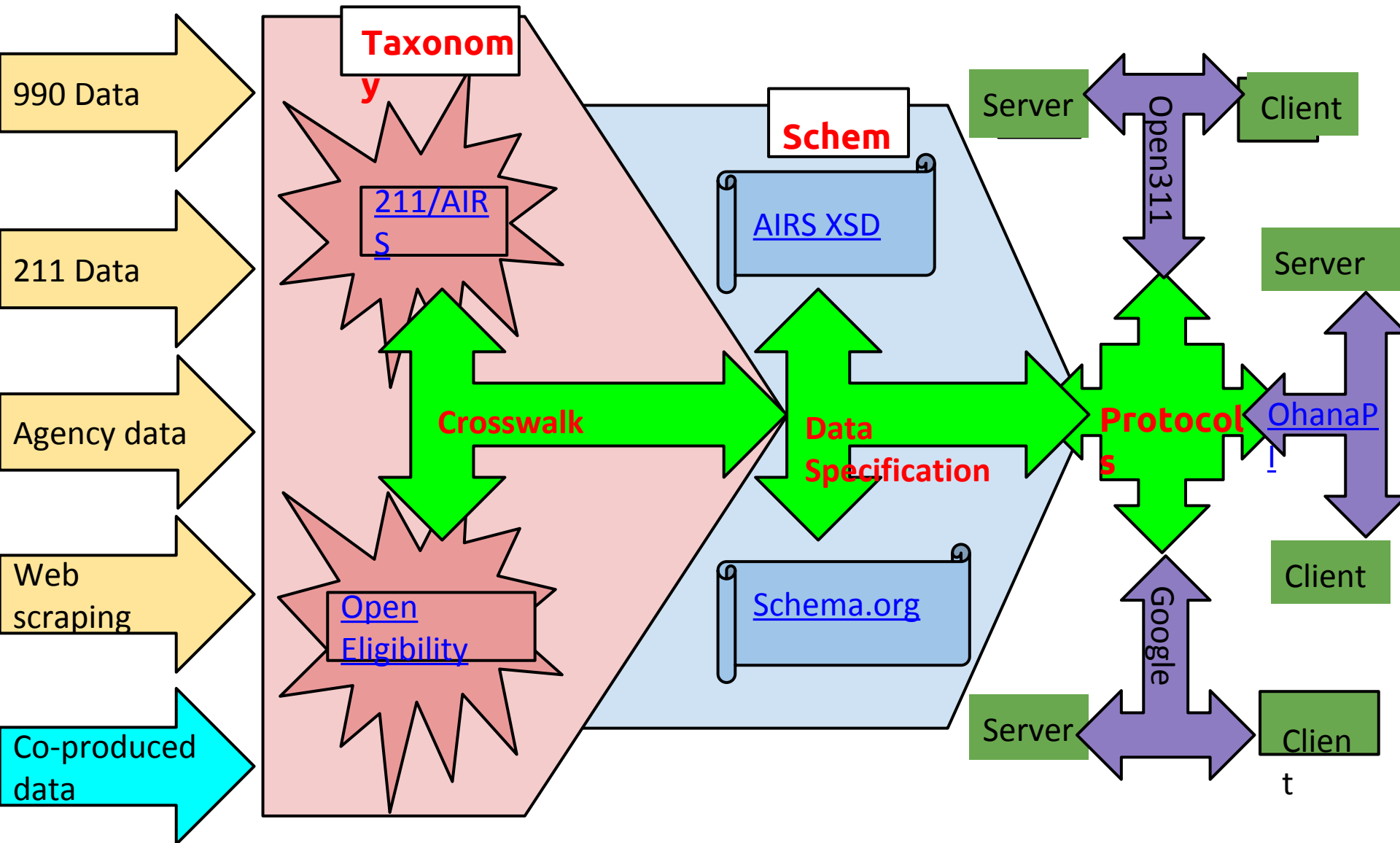
AIRS XSD



W3C Civic Services
schema

- XML developed by **AIRS**
- For **exchange of data between** 211 systems
- Also used by **HUD** and HMIS systems
- HTML markup language **proposed by Google**
- For **search engines** and associated products
- Designed for federal/city services, but **extensible to social services**
- Could be interoperable with

Open211 Universal Data Exchange Stack



What we need to build an 'open resource directory':

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AND!!

- Institutional realignment around data as a shared resource rather than property
 - i.e. we need to reimagine community resource directory data as **a commons**
 - incentive alignment, reciprocal commitments, monitoring, accountability

A commons is...

A shared resource that is subject to dilemmas.

Community resource data is a commons:

- Public information but not a 'public good'
- Non-subtractive and non-exclusive (can be used by many people simultaneously without being depleted)
- Decays rapidly, costly to maintain

Tragedy of the community resource data commons:

- Enclosure (institutional ownership)
- Not interoperable (not readable by others, people)

- Community-led data commons: effort to maintain and improve

Tragedy Drama of the commons

"At any time that individuals may gain from the costly action of others, without themselves contributing time and effort, they face **collective action dilemmas** *for which there are coping methods.*" ~

Nobel Laureate Elinor Ostrom

Free / Open Source : Some Terms

Public Information

Stuff that everyone has a right to know.

Open Data

Organized sets of data that can be freely accessed, taken, "remixed" with other data, etc.

Open Source

Media (applications, content, etc) that can be seen, modified, repurposed.

Free Speech

Your constitutional liberties.

Free Beer

Hey, thanks!

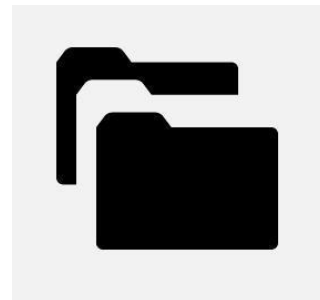
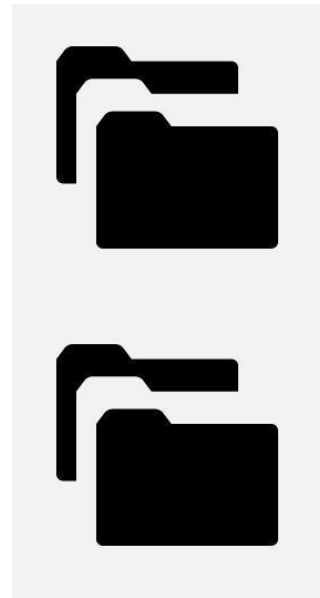
Free Puppy

Got a mop?

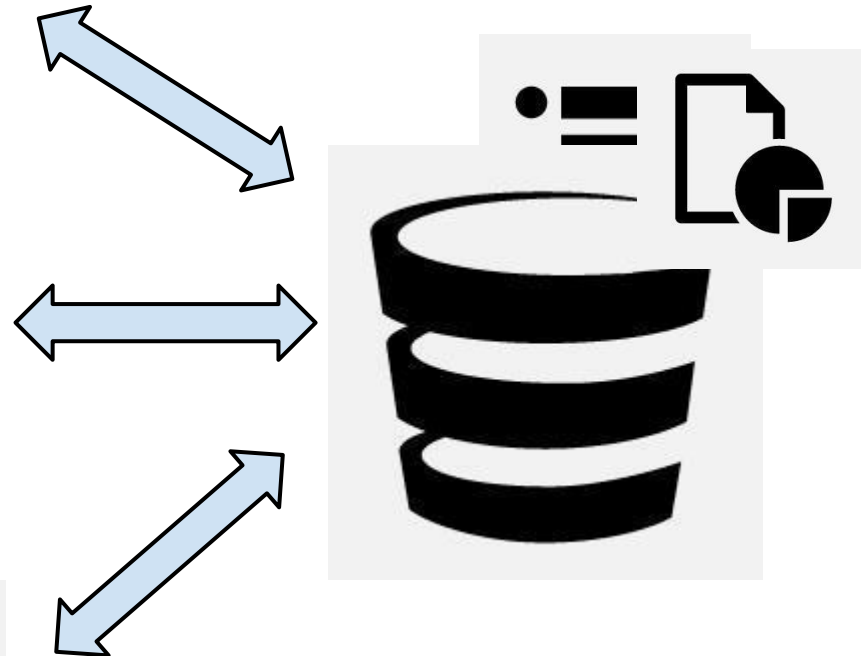
Opening data is not enough.

"[I]n contexts where literacy and social capital are unevenly distributed, **technology tends to amplify inequalities rather than reduce them.**" -- Kentaro Toyama

"This is not to argue against “open data” which in fact is a very significant advance and support to broad-based democratic action and empowerment. Rather it is to argue that **in the absence of specific efforts to ensure the widest possible availability of the prerequisites for “effective use” the outcome of “open data” may be quite the opposite** to that which is anticipated (and presumably desired) by its strongest proponents." -- Michael Gurstein



STEP 4: INSTITUTIONAL REALIGNMENT



People ↔ Data



Enter: the Open Referral Initiative

Enter: the Open Referral Initiative



CODE *for*
AMERICA



Ohana API
connect your community



 Bread *for the*
City™
helping people



 purplebinder



Google



2-1-1™
Get Connected. Get Answers.




AIRS™
Setting the Standards for
Information and Referral Services

Enter: the Open Referral Initiative

Goal: develop the means to ensure that all this stuff is **open** and **interoperable**.

- **A common language** for structuring community resource directory data, and protocols for exchanging it.
- Demo **open platforms** that can integrate *existing* and *new* referral systems.

Enter: the Open Referral Initiative

Objectives:

- Multi-stakeholder Process
- Participatory action research
- Iterative user testing
- Tiers of Local/global governance

Enter: the Open Referral Initiative

Local Teams:

- Stakeholders at center: organizations and civic groups that make referrals daily
- Vendors and I&R orgs as *partners*, who implement according to user prerogatives.

Enter: the Open Referral Initiative

Working Group

- Subject matter specialists: academics, vendors, people with expertise in interoperability
- Reviewing and advising local teams
- Researching options for governance/sustainability

What's at stake:

- Helping people identify resources and make decisions.
- Making service systems more efficient *and* effective
- Evaluating non-profit sector and policymaking.
- Crisis management.
- Community development (asset and needs assessment)

Thanks for listening.

Let's talk!

bloom@codeforamerica.org

<http://openreferral.org>

Icons by the Noun Project

<http://thenounproject.com>



Application
by Kyle Sasquie Klitch



Category
by Berkay Sargin



Data File
by iconoci



Community Mapping
by Iconathon



Group
by Tonielle Krisanski



Data
by United Nations OCHA



Database
by Romeo Barreto



Tag
by Ian Hamilton



Library
by libberry



Community Health Advocate
by Edward Boatman