

Open Data and Hacktivism

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Aarhus Data Drinks #6

~ > whoami

- Member of OSAA since 2010
- FSFE Fellowship Group coordinator
- Member of IT-Politisk Forening
- Writer and political activist
- Writes (and maintains) free software for a living
- www.modspil.dk (blog) – www.magenta.dk (company)
- Interested in civil rights, freedom and transparency in the digital world

Open Data vs Hacktivism

- There's a great interest in government towards opening data – government bodies exist in 36+ countries
- There's a great interest from hacktivists in doing things with Open Data
- These interests are not necessarily aligned

Government motivation for Open Data

- “Make data freely accessible to support productivity and innovation through better exploitation of data”
- “Enable easy access to open data and creation of new services and applications that will make it better, easier and more fun to be a citizen, guest, migrant, etc.”
- Target audience: “Developers, entrepreneurs, organizations, citizens, etc.” (source: ODAA.dk)
- Note absence of words like “transparency”, “accountability”, “citizen participation”, “freedom”, “democracy”

Hacktivism = Hackers + Activism

- A hacker is a person who likes to do things with technology
- A hacker is a person who wants to have access to do things with their own technology
- A hacker is a person who likes to DO THINGS
- A hacker is a person who wants to HAVE ACCESS

Hacking: A very powerful paradigm

- Hackers don't want to sit on their hands, they want to do things
- Hackers are not frightened by lack of skills, they acquire the skills
- Applied to software, this gave us

Free software

- Free software, software as it used to be.
 - '76: William vs. Altair users.
 - '80: Richard vs. the printer.
 - FSF, GNU, GCC
 - BSD, FreeBSD, Apache.
- Must allow:
- Any use
 - Study and modify
 - Redistribute
 - Redistribute modified copies
- This created the infrastructure for

The Internet, by hackers.



**I *don't* mean people who
break into other people's
systems**

“You keep using that word. I do not think it means
what you think it means.”
- Inigo Montoya

Still, in unexpected ways

“I wish to make an extreme statement, if so I may make a emphatic one, for there are enough champions of civilization; the minister, and the school-committee, and every one of you will take care of that.”

- H. D. Thoreau (1817-1862)

Tech is socially relevant

- Hackers have always seen software and the Internet in a social context.
- Publishing free software is a good deed, helping your peers.
- Sharing, self-management and helping other people is crucial.
- Strong ethics.



Sharing is Caring



So, what is “hacktivism”?

Political promotion of hacker values, including (typically):

- Individual freedom
- Civil rights
- Freedom of speech, freedom of movement, freedom of information, free technology
- Often based on direct action: Wikileaks, Anonymous, Tor

Hacktivist motivation for Open Data

- Transparency
- Accountability
- Freedom
- Sharing
- Take control of your own life
- Target audience: CITIZENS
- Note absence of words like “productivity”, “innovation”, “services” and “apps”
- “Have fun” goes without saying

Conflict of interest

- Hackers may do very cool things with open data
- Governments and other data suppliers want hackers to do cool things
- But these are not necessarily the same things
- The coolest things may be those things governments did *not* want or even think of

Case: Aaron Swartz



- Demand Progress: Killed **SOPA/PIPA!**
- Reddit co-founder.
- Worked with Tim Berners-Lee at w3c.
- Freed 20% of **PACER**.
- Tried to free **JSTOR**, but was stopped and hounded.

RIP

Case: Christian Panton

- Found security flaws and exposed privacy nightmare in Rejsekortet
- Created a JavaScript client for NemID
- Was threatened with legal action
- We should all **thank him**



Nets: Vi bruger softwarepatenter

Den hjemmeudviklede NemID-klient bliver truet af Nets patenter. Man kan nemlig godt have patent på software, siger Nets, som ikke vil uddybe yderligere.

Af Jesper Kildebogaard Mandag, 17. marts 2014 - 12:14

Der var ikke meget begejstring hos Nets DanID, som driver NemID, da datalogen Christian Panton spurgte om firmaets holdning til hans hjemmelavede NemID-klient. Faktisk var svaret til ham en direkte advarsel om retslige skridt, hvis han på nogen måde tog klienten i brug eller offentliggjorde koden.

Læs også: Datalog overhaler det offentlige med egenudviklet NemID-klient: "Vi skal have flere øjne på protokollen"

Læs også: Hjemmeudviklet NemID-klient får syngende nej: Trues med 'nødvendige juridiske tiltag'

Læs også: Nets: Hjemmelavet NemID-klient kan krænke vores ophavsret

Argumentet var, at en hjemmeudviklet klient, baseret på reverse-engineering af NemID's officielle klient, ville være en krænkelse af både Nets DanID's ophavsret og af patenter, som beskytter noget af teknologien i løsningen.

Hvordan det hænger sammen, ville Version2 meget gerne høre Nets fortælle mere om, men bortset fra en kort skriftlig kommentar vil firmaet ikke længere kommentere svaret til Christian Panton.

Nets har 'ikke yderligere kommentarer til den konkrete sag, og ønsker heller ikke at medvirke i interview,' skriver firmaets kommunikationsmedarbejder, Ulrik Marschall, til Version2.

Lesson: You don't have to wait for data to become open. You can open them yourself.

Lesson: All public protocols should always be open.

Case: Transparência Hacker, Brazil

- Loosely (de-)organized network of hacktivists
- Driven by individual actions or smaller groups
- Do-ocracy – what matters is what you hack
- Everyone can speak on behalf of THacker
- “This has allowed us to work more actively with/against political parties and ideologies and put transparency and openness over 'practical results'”



Mapping financial loans from Brazil's development bank, **April 2012**

Transparência Hacker, ctd

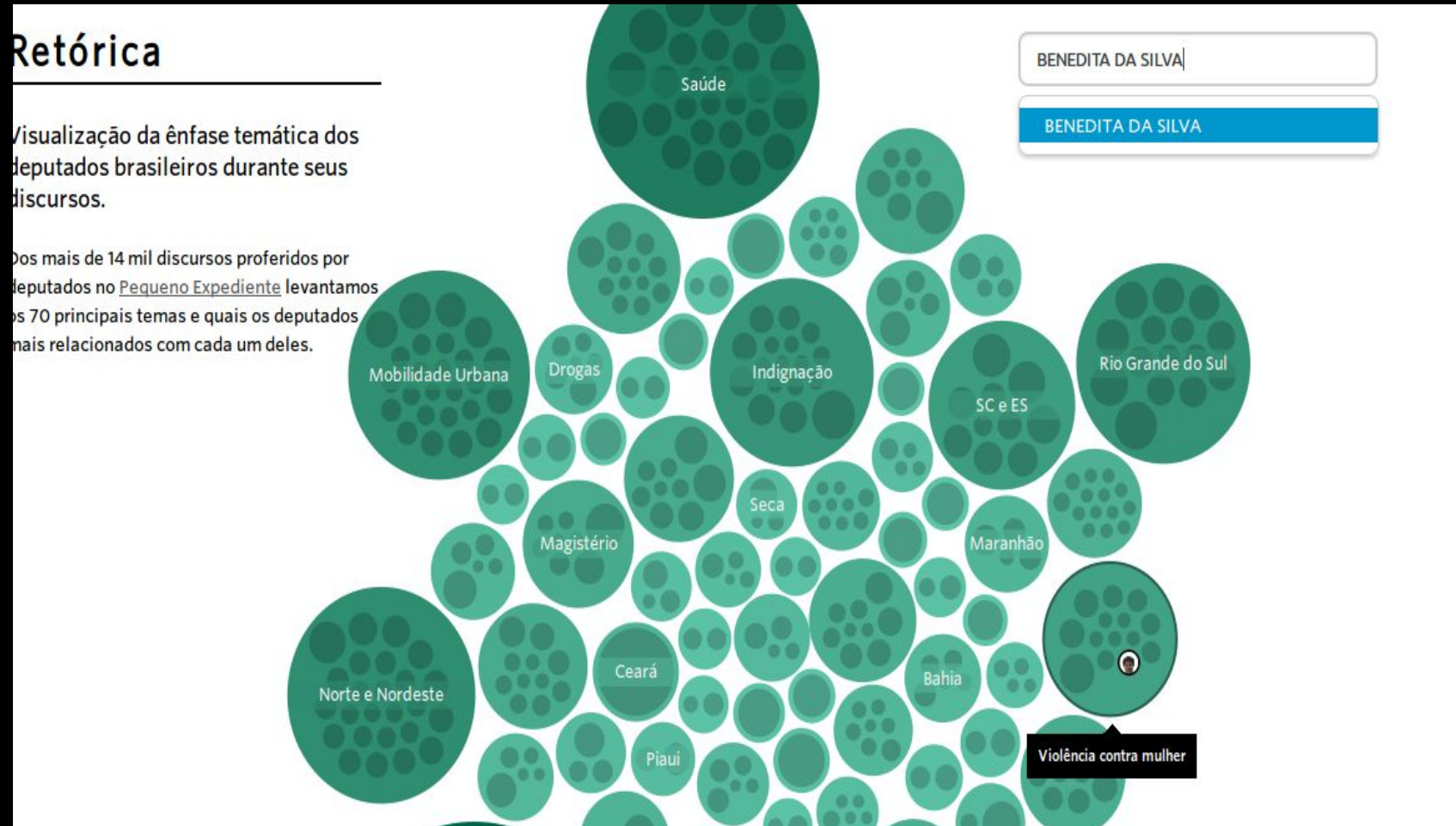


are the same big companies that control the public transit system, which is not really public here in Rio de Janeiro.

Hackday in **June, 2013**: Digging data on Rio's bus money trail (just before the huge protests)

Danish equivalent – flow of money to political parties?

Rhetorical analysis of speeches in Parliament



Refine endlessly. Could be (ehem) interesting in a Danish context. Code is on Github!

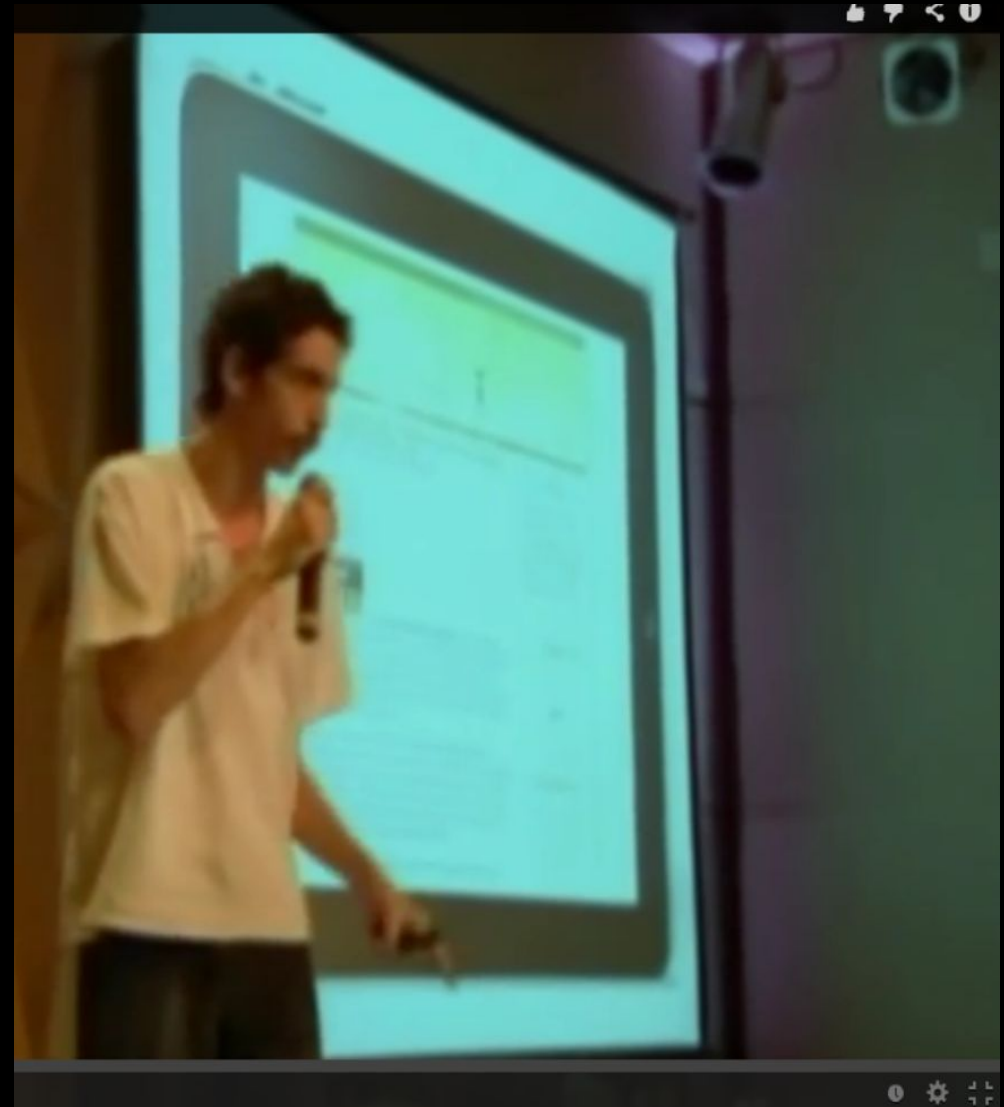
Simple, good hacks

- planalto.gov.br – Brazilian whitehouse.gov
- Nice presidential blog – but no comments!
- CC licensed



Transparência Hacker solved the problem

- Pedro Markun took Dilma's blog
- Scraped an exact copy
- Added comments!
- 15 minutes of work
- Thousands of comments
- Completely legal



No limits to creative (and subversive) imagination

The screenshot shows a web browser at the URL `politicaesportecube.com/about/`. The page has a green header with navigation links: START, PEC BRAZIL, RANKINGS, TOP 100, PARTIES, LEAGUES, MY PARTY, and LOGOUT. The main content area features the logo for "POLÍTICA ESPORTE CLUBE" and a yellow badge indicating "1º LUGAR" (1st Place). The title "THE P.E.C. BRAZIL IS THE GAME THAT THE COUNTRY NEEDS" is prominently displayed. Below the title, there is a description in English and Portuguese about electing politicians and earning points based on their performance. A section titled "CURTIU? JOGUE E COMPARTILHE. O PAÍS AGRADECE!" encourages sharing the game. A "RULES" link is provided. On the right side, there is a profile card for Raimundo Coimbra Junior, a member of the PMDB party from Tocantins, showing his score of 12. Next to the profile card is a table of statistics:

Category	Value
Votings	0 / 2.00
Presences	67 / 330.00
Propositions	2 / 88.00
Expenses	R\$ 90793 / 101224

A "See more" link is located at the bottom of the statistics table.

Fantasy game – choose team of MPs, get points based on their actual performance
Also check out **game of life!**

You can hack more than data



The hacker bus! Going everywhere in Brazil to help people hack.
When touring, participants do crocheting – because sharing > technology

Maybe you could even hack the law

- Transparência Hacker created an amendment to Brazil's Freedom of Information Act stating data covered *must* be in machine readable format
- This was accepted – is now the law of the land!
- Why don't we put up a hackerspace in Parliament already?

Hackerspace in Congress



- Yes, they did that
- Every citizen has the right to come, use the computers, hack the government
- Conflict in full play – shiny apps vs.
"hack from inside the Leviathan's belly"

So how will this play out?

- **Pedro Markun**: “It's still early to see if it will actually become a hackerspace of sorts, or it will bend its subversive will to the ways of traditional politics and policies... but it's a really interesting and powerful experiment.” (You better believe it!)
- Don't work against them, work with them. Don't work with them, work against them.
- Obviously, a lot of this is really about social rather than technological hacking
- **Daniela Silva**: It's not the products, it's the process

Hactivist Point of View

- Hacking is not about being productive and innovative
- Hacking is about making the world a better place
(even if it's only your own little world)
- Hackers will do that because they have fun doing it, and because they believe in it
- Hackers are not trained monkeys who will sit in a corner and innovate your business if you throw them a few ~~bananas~~ pizzas and Coke (or dollars)

Hacktivist point of view ctd

- Hackers are passionate people who will acquire whatever skills they need to get things done
- Hackers are skilled because they are passionate and intelligent, not passionate because they are skilled
- Productivity and innovation may result, but it's the other way round
- Hackers gave us the Internet, but we didn't ask for it

Hacktivist bottom line

- Open data are about freedom, transparency and convenience for citizens
- Open data are important because they increase transparency and knowledge about the world we live in
- Open data are important because they allow us to reshuffle and recreate the world in unexpected ways
- Hacktivists want to use open data to change the world
- If they try, they *will* make a difference. It's not the product, it's the process.

Questions?

- Thanks for your patience
- Also by email to agger@modspil.dk
- Remember to vote

