

# Major Step in US Open Data Policy



US President Barack Obama has signed an Executive Order to make government-held data more accessible to the public, declaring that information is a valuable resource and strategic asset for the United States. The Memorandum establishes a framework to help institutionalise the principles of effective information management at each stage of the information's life cycle to promote interoperability and openness.

The Executive Order is the latest in a series of actions - started in 2009 - in support of increasing access to and transparency of government information.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) immediately followed with a Memorandum to the heads of all American executive departments and agencies requiring that they

establish policies to promote the free and open availability of government data.

The Memorandum makes information resources accessible, discoverable and usable by the public, with the aim to help fuel entrepreneurship, innovation and scientific discovery. The US government compares the open data policy with the free availability of weather data and GPS to anyone. Since then, entrepreneurs and innovators have used these resources to create navigation systems, weather newscasts, location-based applications, precision farming tools and much more.

Agencies are now required to collect or create information in a way that supports downstream information processing and dissemination activities. Machine-readable and open formats, data standards, and extensible metadata for all new information creation and collection efforts. The Memorandum also involves agencies building or modernising information systems in a way that maximises interoperability and information accessibility, maintains internal and external data asset inventories, enhances information safeguards and clarifies management responsibilities.