

How is Open Data used by social enterprises?

Social enterprises and charities are well placed to benefit from Open Data.

Unlike their for-profit contemporaries, social enterprises and charities prioritise the creation of social value over economic value.

The use of Open Data has grown alongside the development of new 'civic tech' organisations – or digital social enterprises.

Here are a few of the benefits:

- **Low cost:** Social enterprises often have a reduced resource base, so the ability to obtain free Open Data can be particularly valuable to them. This enables them to create innovative apps and services which generate income for use in the creation of social value.
- **Civic innovation:** Social enterprises are able to improve government agency transparency through the development of new apps and services. The increased publication of Open Data by government agencies is beneficial, but citizens can often struggle to make sense of Open Data, or are unfamiliar as to how they can engage with political processes. Presenting government Open Data in citizen-friendly formats, or creating apps that enables citizens to engage with government agencies can be particularly useful in creating social value.
- **Benchmarking and one-off projects:** Civic campaigns to develop awareness and enact social change benefit from an evidence base. Enhanced access to Open Data from government agencies provides research data that can be used to undertake research and campaign for change. Having access to relevant, accurate and robust Open Data can be beneficial.

Sourced under CC BY from [Future Learn: Using Open Data for Digital Business](#)

© Royal Holloway, University of London