Transitioning to Open Government Data: What Are the Trade-Offs? a federal spending data case study

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National Priorities Project
Federal Spending Data: Make Way for the New Terminated
Consolidated Federal Funds Report

Select a year (1993 & onward):
2009 (latest data)  Go

Contact us for data before 1993

Related Sites
- Federal Assistance Award Data System
- Federal Aid to States Report [PDF, 916.85KB]

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Call us: (301) 763-1565

Consolidated Federal Funds Report

Latest Consolidated Federal Funds Report 2009

Search national, state and county level data by object area, agency and program code.

- On-Line Query System
- Viewable Data – CFFR Publication [PDF, 1.25MB]
- Downloadable Data –
  - U.S. and Individual States Combined [ZIP, 4.94MB] – Single file containing data
  - Individual State Files [ZIP, 5.04MB] – 50 States, territories and D.C. as individual files

Select a State  Go

Reference Information –
- Revisions to Previous Publications [PDF, 390KB]
- Technical Documentation [PDF, 811KB] – Contains definitions and explanations
- Program Identification File [TXT, 246KB] – Contains program identification codes
- Agency File [TXT, 65KB] – Contains Federal agency identification codes and...
USASpending.gov: Shiny
timely, granular, API, sub-awards, detailed search, graphs & maps
Responsibility Shifts to Consumer

“change in emphasis from providing government information to information consumers to providing information to mediators...While information consumers typically require some analysis and simplification, information mediators can achieve more innovative solutions with the most raw form of government data.”

2nd Principle of Open Government Data from Open Government Data by Josh Tauberer
Unavoidable Trade-Offs
## Unavoidable Trade-Offs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement</th>
<th>Trade-Off</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Data Fields</td>
<td>Simplicity &amp; Usability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granularity</td>
<td>Single Format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granularity</td>
<td>Convenient Aggregates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unfortunate Losses
Unfortunate Losses: Data Sources

CFFR had:

- Federal disability and retirement benefits
- Aggregated salaries
- Earned Income Tax Credit (refundable portion)
Unfortunate Losses: Continuity

CONSOLIDATED FEDERAL FUNDS REPORT 1983 - 2010
Unfortunate Losses: Data Scrubbing
Unfortunate Losses: Support

- USASpending support = no phone number
- CFFR: phone number published on front page
Can We Mitigate Trade-Offs & Losses?

• How can we support data consumers without tech resources?
• What’s a good model for promoting dataset literacy and community?
• Can open gov types contribute by filling in some of the gaps?