Opening up Government Datasets for Big Data Analysis to Support Policy Decisions

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Abstract : Policy makers are increasingly looking to make evidence-based decisions. Evidence-based decisions have historically used rigorous methodologies of empirical studies by research institutes, as well as less reliable immediate survey/polls often with limited sample sizes. As we move into the era of Big Data analytics, policy makers are looking to different methodologies to deliver reliable empirics in real-time. The question is not why did these people do this for the last 10 years, but why are these people doing this now, and if the this is undesirable, and how can we have an impact to promote change immediately. Big data analytics rely heavily on government data that has been released in to the public domain. The open data movement promises greater productivity and more efficient delivery of services; however, Australian government agencies remain reluctant to release their data to the general public. This paper considers the barriers to releasing government data as open data, and how these barriers might be overcome.