House of Commons
CANADA

# Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics

EVIDENCE

# Tuesday, December 7, 2010

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## Chair

**The Honourable Shawn Murphy**

# Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics

**Tuesday, December 7, 2010**

● (1530)

[*English*]

**The Chair (Hon. Shawn Murphy (Charlottetown, Lib.)):** I will now call the meeting to order.

Welcome, everyone. *Bienvenue à tous*.

This meeting is called pursuant to the Standing Orders, and it deals with our ongoing study into open government.

The committee is very pleased to have before us today two witnesses. First of all, we have with us in person Mr. Michael Mulley from Montreal. He's a web programmer, but he's also the developer and owner of that website, which is probably familiar to most of us, entitled openparliament.ca. He certainly has dealt with open government data and he's aware of the opportunities and challenges of which it avails itself.

We have, through video teleconference, Mr. Chris Moore. Mr. Moore is the chief information officer with the City of Edmonton, and he can bring to us the perspective of a municipality in dealing with the release and dissemination of collected data.

What I plan to do is go until five o'clock with our two witnesses, and then we will go in camera. The committee has to deal with certain budgetary items. Also I would like to review and approve, if possible, the report that has been prepared under the Google study.

First of all, I want to check whether the teleconferencing is working okay.

Mr. Moore, can you hear me okay?

**Mr. Chris Moore (Chef Information Officer, Information Technology, City of Edmonton):** Yes, absolutely. Can you hear me as well?

**The Chair:** I can hear you as well.

Thank you very much for your assistance and for your appearance via Edmonton.

We'll call upon opening comments. I'm going to start with you, Mr. Mulley.

Mr. Mulley, welcome to the committee. I understand this is your first time before a parliamentary committee.

**Mr. Michael Mulley (Web programmer, As an Individual):** Absolutely.

**The Chair:** We're looking forward to hearing your remarks. Go ahead.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michael Mulley:** Thank you very much.

I want to thank you for inviting me here. I'm very pleased that Parliament is conducting this study and I am honoured to contribute to it.

[*English*]

I'm here because about six months ago I launched a site called openparliament.ca. I know that some of you have seen it and have said nice things about it, which I appreciate very much. But for those of you who aren't aware of it, it's a site that tries to make it easier to keep tabs on some of the things that are going on in the House and tries to make such things as Hansard a little more engaging and useful. You all have pages on the site that show anything you've said recently on the House floor, along with media coverage, votes, any legislation you've introduced, and so on. It's all searchable. You can sign up for e-mails or updates when a given MP speaks, a bill is discussed, or a particular keyword is mentioned.

I made it as a volunteer, spare time project and I'm hugely pleased that people have found it useful and that it is used by tens of thousands of Canadians each month.

I should say that I've never worked for, in, or even really with government. So if I'm going to talk about open government, the subject of this study, it will be very much from an outsider's perspective.

Open government is a fairly vague term that has meant many things over many years, but the current usage—and you'll also hear "Government 2.0" as a synonym—means to me the idea that recent advances in technology can enable a government that is more engaged, collaborative, cooperative, and better able to spark certain kinds of innovation. This is certainly an appealing notion to me, and I hope to you, but it's also a bunch of fairly vague and happy words that would be fairly difficult to disagree with.

So to talk about something more concrete in an area in which I have at least a little knowledge, I'll focus on one particular idea, that of open data.

Let me quote Australia's Government 2.0 task force, whose absolutely excellent report I'd really recommend you look at: "... public sector information is a national resource and...releasing as much of it as possible on as permissive terms as possible will maximize its economic and social value and reinforce [its contribution] to a healthy democracy."

Let me turn to data. When many people hear the word "data", their eyelids start to grow heavier, their shoulders start to slump. I think that's a pity. When I hear data, I get excited. To me, data means possibility, it means opportunity, it means discovery. I really hope I can share with you at least some small part of that sense of excitement.

Let's take care of definitions. When I say data, I mean big piles of information structured so that computers can make sense of it—like Hansard, like pollutant inventories in industrial safety reports, like bus schedules, like satellite imagery, like the list of registered charities and their public filings, like government-funded scientific papers, like digital maps and details in the postal code system, like records of prescribed drugs and of disease occurrence. There are endless examples. If you ask anyone working in technology how great the value of data can be, the answer you'll get is immense.

Increasingly the Internet economy is driven by companies working to figure out how to extract value from data. Ray Ozzie is a computer legend—I'm a computer programmer, I should note—and currently a leader at Microsoft. Let me quote him: "Data is the flint for the next 25 years."

A corollary to that is that the value of data is often not apparent at first. Less than a decade ago, many people didn't think that web search data, which you type into the little search box in your computers, was all that valuable. Companies offered web search, of course, but often as a sort of loss leader. Then Google came along and realized that in fact this web search data was worth many billions of dollars a year.

Several studies have attempted to measure the value of government data. A European study put the market size for the used public sector information at 27 billion euros, and other reports have come up with similarly staggering numbers. It's tremendously valuable, this data, and to lots of different groups: to those interested in public policy, whether researchers or, as is increasingly possible, just engaged citizens; to businesses in all manner of industries; to civic-minded Canadians, who in some ways have a new way of engaging with government and building things to help each other out; and to government, where data is of course used in planning and programs, which can now have the possibility of benefiting from much of this external innovation.

If we recognize the value of government data, it's the "open" in open data that allows that value to be unlocked. The words means many things, and I think it's worth the time for me to quickly try to unpack the phrase.

● (1535)

The first is that it be—and there is a piece of jargon coming up, but I promise it's important—machine-readable.

Let me use my site to explain what I mean by that. I republish Hansard, which I get from the website of Parliament, but because of the way it's made available, getting the data out so that I can republish it is difficult, and it took quite a bit of time and trickery on my part. The methods I use are fragile, so if Parliament changes the look or format of its site—or your site, I suppose—mine breaks. Because getting the data out is difficult, it's much harder to do all

sorts of things, such as making my site fully bilingual—which it isn't—or reporting on committees like this one.

In my case this isn't the end of the world. The hurdles have caused plenty of frustration, but the site nonetheless exists. Often data that aren't machine-readable are simply too difficult to make productive use of. To make data available in a machine-readable way, which is more conducive to exploration, is for the most part not hard from the point of view of technology. The roadblocks here are matters of will and of culture.

"Open", in the context of open data, also means "free". In English that's one word, but it means two very important things.

● (1540)

[*Translation*]

In order to be truly useful, government data should be free of cost and accessible.

[*English*]

They should be free of cost because that's how they'll most efficiently create economic value and support innovation, and because sharing information that already exists over the Internet costs government next to nothing. They should be free, as in speech, by which I mean available under terms that allow repurposing and redistribution, which is exactly where the greatest value lies.

I want to stress that repurposing isn't an addendum or a blue-sky wish list item. Open Parliament is an example, of course, of repurposing, but there are others, even if I just restrict myself to my own life.

Here's one: I lived in New York for a while, where this wonderful website called EveryBlock takes the mundane details of municipal government—building permits, business permits, restaurant inspections, crime reports, municipal hearings—and repurposes them to publish a newspaper for your own block. What's done in aggregate becomes interesting when it's filtered for what's relevant and nearby, and doing that makes participating in local government that much more likely.

Here's another personal example: I studied public health briefly. What one often does in that field is try take disparate data sets—let's say cancer incidence and pollutant release—and try to combine and repurpose them to generate hypotheses to make Canadians healthier.

That's why it's crucial for the default posture of government to be sharing, rather than presenting a closed door, and why the default terms for government information should be an open licence similar to Creative Commons and several others, and not the current innovation-killing restrictions of crown copyright.

Anyone who's tried to work with government data has come up against that default posture of a closed door. Here are some personal examples: under what's called the Speaker's permission, I'm able to republish the Hansards of the House, but that's not true of the Senate. Republishing that is illegal. Your official photographs are under crown copyright, and I was unable to get permission to use them. On the municipal level, in Montreal I've tried to get digital maps of the city's political districts, *les arrondissements*, and I've tried to get bus schedules, and I've been rebuffed, despite knowing that it would take literally five minutes to send me the latter in computer-readable form.

A friend in Halifax tried a few years back to get the same information there—bus schedules, maps, and political districts—and was also denied, but he went further. An access to information request was denied and a court challenge was denied, with one of the grounds for denial being that the digital map was not a document but a mechanism for producing documents.

Needless to say, I disagree with the decision, but there's something in that phrase that catches my interest: a mechanism for producing information. Yes, in an information economy that's more or less the point: a means of creating information. Just last Saturday thousands of people across the world and hundreds in Canada got together for what was called an open data day, an event spearheaded by David Eaves in Vancouver and a fantastic team from right here in Ottawa.

[*Translation*]

I worked with a group in Montreal. Some twenty people worked on a dozen or so municipal projects, in particular on a site announcing which municipal rinks are open and have been flooded, and on a system to advise drivers about new road construction they might encounter on their regular route.

[*English*]

Digital maps are a means of creating information. That's borne out by the experience of Natural Resources Canada, NRCan, the only federal department with a thriving open data culture. Its geographic data sets are used by a huge community of researchers, who will tell you just how valuable they are. They're used heavily by industry, including mining and forestry, of course, but also real estate developers and burger joints, and even by me. I used data from NRCan's GeoGratis program for a recent project related to finding polling places in municipal elections.

I really believe this means of creating information and sparking innovation is one of the strongest arguments for an open government policy and release of open data. There are many points of view from which to argue for open data, and from there for the broader concept of open government. I've given you only one. For example, I haven't really mentioned accountability and transparency, which are very useful things in their own right, but I hope that I've been able to communicate at least some of the excitement that I and increasing numbers of Canadians feel about this, and I hope that that Canada will join what is a growing and promising worldwide movement.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Mulley.

Now we're going to hear from Mr. Moore. Mr. Moore, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Chris Moore:** Thank you very much, and good afternoon to the Honourable Shawn Murphy, committee chair; to the honourable members of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics; and to parliamentary staff.

Thank you very much for the invitation to address the committee, and thank you as well for making arrangements for me to participate by video conference.

The City of Edmonton is very pleased to have this opportunity to contribute to the committee's study on open government. The City of Edmonton is a global leader among municipalities regarding open government, whether through live or archived access to council meetings or through advances within our website regarding community-based information.

The city believes that the effective use of technology can enable public engagement and access to information. In addition to providing access to information, the city is also very focused on its responsibilities with regard to keeping private information private and secure.

Open government is now more than a trend; it has become a global movement. The governments of New Zealand, Australia, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom have demonstrated how new technology has enabled national governments to become increasingly open and accountable to their citizens.

Leading by example, Edmonton has greatly contributed to both open government and the open data movement in Canada. In March 2010 we were invited to Canberra, in the Australian capital territory—

●(1545)

**The Chair:** Mr. Moore, may I interrupt you for ten seconds and ask you to to slow down a bit? The reason is that your comments are being translated, and if you slow down by about 20% to 30%, it would be helpful.

Thank you.

**Mr. Chris Moore:** All right. Sorry about that.

Open government, as I said, is more than a trend: it has become a global movement. The governments of New Zealand, Australia, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom have demonstrated how new technologies have enabled national governments to become increasingly open and accountable to their citizens.

Leading by example, Edmonton has greatly contributed to both the open government and open data movements in Canada. In March of 2010 we were invited to the Australian capital territory in Canberra to meet with the Australian Government 2.0 task force and also to meet with senior staff working on the implementation of their national Government 2.0 direction.

There have been a number of articles published in Canada, France, and the Asia-Pacific area regarding our strategies and practices. In 2009 we spent time reviewing the use of information and technology within the City of Edmonton. Our review guided us to our new strategic direction, which is to balance between meeting the needs of our city departments as they deliver service to citizens and business and developing sustainable technology solutions for the corporation as a whole.

In order to meet both those needs, it was imperative that we reviewed the possibilities of what we call an "open ecosystem". In our open ecosystem we're developing solutions using open data, open source, open systems, and open networks. To achieve this, we invited Edmonton-based companies as well as other orders of government and other public organizations into this ecosystem.

We determined that our first opportunity was to develop an open data catalogue. While the City of Edmonton provides information on our website in PDF and text formats, these are not the most accessible formats for people who want to use our data to develop software. Our open data catalogue provides the information in a machine-readable format, and in doing so has increased the usefulness of our municipal information.

In October 2009 city councillor Don Iveson tabled an administrative inquiry requesting the city administration to respond to the following questions:

What level of awareness does the city administration have regarding open data in municipal government?

What current initiatives are under way within city administration that might qualify under the spirit of open data?

What further initiatives are under consideration within the city, and on what basis are they being evaluated?

Is administration monitoring any success or challenges with this trend in other jurisdictions, especially large Canadian cities, and if so, what can be shared with council?

What would the city administration recommend on next steps regarding open data, plans, or strategies?

On January 13, 2010, the city administration responded to this inquiry and launched our open data catalogue. Through innovation and creativity, the city's open data catalogue was developed in three weeks. Initially it contained 12 data sets. The data catalogue has now expanded to over 40 data sets, including data from school boards and other organizations.

Releasing the data in an open format continues to prove how tangible and useful data can be when repurposed. On October 18, 2010, once the polls were closed during the 2010 election, up-to-date election result information was provided every five minutes via the open data catalogue, with the results visualized using an application developed by a local Edmonton software developer. The same developer used the same application to create election visualization for open data during the Ontario municipal elections the next week, so thanks to open data and the enterprising spirit of one Edmontonian, the cities of London, Ottawa, and Toronto also benefited on election night in Ontario.

As part of our open ecosystem in 2010, the City of Edmonton ran an applications competition. This was a contest in which software developers were challenged to develop useful programs for citizens using the open data from the City of Edmonton. Edmonton was the first municipality and the first government agency in Canada to run such a competition, and $50,000 in prizes were awarded to six companies or individuals, with 32 applications developed and 86 ideas submitted by the public. Apps4Edmonton was a huge success. It was an example of how open government can be extremely practical for citizens and also provide economic development opportunities.

In October of this year the City of Edmonton was the showcase municipality at the government and technology event in Ottawa known as GTEC. The city showcased the work of the Apps4Edmonton winners, with two of the winners recreating their apps for the citizens of Ottawa during GTEC.

These are just a few examples of how the City of Edmonton is taking advantage of open government and leveraging technology to increase public engagement in the provision of information.

● (1550)

What's next for Edmonton? The City of Edmonton has been working with the cities of Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa to establish a working relationship to advance the work on open government and open data. By partnering together on items such as revisions to our data licence and data catalogue format, we can all advance more quickly and develop a standard approach across all cities.

The City of Edmonton is currently developing further strategies on open government by considering which policies and bylaws need to be in place to ensure sustainability of the work already completed. The information technology branch is working with business units across the city to liberate data and integrate open data catalogue feeds as a standard feature in city business systems. In 2009 and 2010 the city hosted workshops that were open to city staff, the public, and the technology sector. At these workshops the city worked collaboratively to build the open government direction. This approach of community engagement will continue in this critical component.

The city has also hosted a workshop on open government for municipalities in the capital region, encouraging them to consider the benefits of open data and providing access to our information, knowledge, and experience. A number of municipalities in the capital region are working on open data initiatives.

The City of Edmonton has also worked closely with the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta and the commissioner's office. The City of Edmonton is supportive of the September 1, 2010, resolution of the federal, provincial, and territorial information and privacy commission entitled "Open Government Resolution". The city is working with the provincial Information and Privacy Commissioner in 2011 to further develop open government solutions and opportunities at both the municipal and provincial levels within Alberta.

The city's investment in and commitment to open government contributes significantly to building a great city.

Again, I'd like to thank the Honourable Shawn Murphy, committee chair, and the honourable members of the standing committee for this opportunity to present the value of open government for the City of Edmonton.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Moore, and congratulations on all the excellent work the city has undertaken on this initiative.

We're now going to go to questions by members. The first round will go to the Liberals, and it's seven minutes.

Dr. Bennett will begin.

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Thanks very much, and thanks to both the witnesses.

In the federal government there are three branches: the legislative branch, the executive branch, and the judicial branch. Here we are obviously dealing mainly with the executive branch in relation to open government, but I think we will be pressing on in the study at the Library of Parliament committee to deal more with Michael's open Parliament approach in terms of making sure that we, as parliamentarians, have the technology and tools that we need to do a better job representing Canadians between elections. We'll be looking at that.

All three areas, obviously, have to be open if we're going to actually have open government. I would like to know where you both feel we are in Canada in that endeavour. As we proceed on this study at the committee, what advice do you have for the committee as to what we should be asking from witnesses?

Obviously we think it's a bit early for you to dictate the recommendations, but in terms of the biggest possible approach to open government, I would like to know some of the things you think we should focus on as a committee and how we should proceed, and from the municipal point of view, how does that marry with what the citizens we share at all levels of government need in order to conduct their business?

At the beginning I have to say that at the Public Health Agency of Canada, I had huge excitement at the prospect of GIS mapping of the social determinants of health being able to actually show neighbourhoods of high need, in terms of poverty, violence, the environment, shelter, equity, and education, and how you would, as you say, merge all those data such that Canadians could actually see that we would be able to do needs-based funding based on what showed on the mapping of the data.

Do you have some advice, each of you, in terms of how to begin this huge project?

● (1555)

**Mr. Michael Mulley:** I want to be careful not to talk too many levels above my pay grade and start giving advice—

**The Chair:** We all do it here, so go ahead.

**Mr. Michael Mulley:** —but I can say what the outcomes should be.

You asked what Canada's current level was. There are some departments at the federal level, namely NRCan, which I mentioned, who are doing excellent work, but they're the exception right now. Internationally, in comparison with many of its peers, Canada does not have a federal open-data effort; it does not have any sort of federal open government effort. Those peers, which Chris mentioned, are governments like the U.S., U.K., Australia, and New Zealand. Those are the biggest names.

The advantage of so many of these other countries having spearheaded efforts in this area in recent years, though, is that there's now a surplus of models. I mentioned Australia's Government 2.0 task force, and their report is great reading. I really recommend that you take a look at it. It's online. It really lays out a lot of the approaches to open government in clear language and with a lot of recommendations.

The way those efforts have proceeded—and I'm focusing a little bit on the relatively technical open-data aspects of this—is that they have generally included a statement from the highest level of government that departments should identify the high-level data sets they have and start releasing them; and there's generally been a central coordinating agency that establishes practices for doing that, and sets licensing conditions. That's the way in which most of the models have proceeded.

**The Chair:** Mr. Moore.

**Mr. Chris Moore:** Thank you.

That's an excellent question. I've been thinking a lot about this over the last year, especially when Senator Lundy and her staff invited me to Australia earlier this year.

My concern is that a number of years ago we had a leadership position in the world when it came to e-governance and web transactions. In talking to people in Australia—and this year I've also been in Seoul, and in Manila a few weeks ago—I really believe that we have lost our leadership position as a country. I think it would be relatively easy to get it back, because we do have good collaboration among orders of government across the country. In terms of doing something, the question is, where do you start?

The work that was done in early September by the information and privacy commissioners, federally and provincially and territorially, I think was unique. I've not seen that in any of the other countries that have a Government 2.0 strategy. Typically, in the other countries—Australia, New Zealand, and the U.S.—you get really driven by the party or the politician, which is difficult at times, because if the players change, as they did in Australia, how do you know if the strategy is going to survive? There was a period of time when they didn't even know who was leading the country.

The Government 2.0 task force, or the work that was done in Australia, I would absolutely say is a model. The neat thing they did and the important thing that we've discovered at a local level is that you need the engagement. You need the engagement of the community. The question is, who is the community?

I was speaking this morning at an event over at the War Museum, GoC3, a gathering of civil servants, Web 2.0 practitioners, and social media. They were talking about technology. I told them this morning, and I'll tell you the same thing, that we have, among 240,000 civil servants, so many creative and very inspiring people—for me. They know what needs to be done. We just need some kind of a rallying cry, some kind of a strategy to bring them all together. I think we have all of the elements in the country. We have engaged civil servants, we have engaged politicians at all levels, and we have the ability to work together.

I really think, if we pull something together as a country, all orders of government, we could actually surpass the other countries, because the other countries are really led more from their national or central government, and don't typically engage the local or state or provincial governments.

● (1600)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Moore

Thank you, Dr. Bennett.

We're now going to go to Madame Freeman, *pour sept minutes*.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Carole Freeman (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, BQ):** I'd like to thank Mr. Mulley and Mr. Moore. Their remarks were very interesting.

Regarding the project that Mr. Mulley has been working on for the past six months, Canada's Information Commissioner, Ms. Suzanne Legault, has said that your websites are the way of the future, especially in light of voter disengagement from politics, especially among those in the 25 years of age and under demographic group. She also expressed disappointment over the fact that this was a private, and not a government initiative.

How do you feel about what she said?

**Mr. Michael Mulley:** It was very kind of her to say that. I hope...

**Mrs. Carole Freeman:** What do you think about her second comment, namely that she was disappointed in the fact this initiative came from private citizens and not from government?

**Mr. Michael Mulley:** When we talk about open data, it means that members of the public can, for any number of reasons, innovate in a way that the State cannot. There are not many things that the State should not do, but there are many reasons why ordinary citizens can innovate in a variety of ways.

[*English*]

I am very happy to hear these comments about my site, but there are all sorts of things that I'm able to do that others, such as Parliament, can't. For instance, I pair things that have been said in the House with news coverage and Twitter feeds, and so on, which, for various structural reasons, Parliament can't do. I can react much

more quickly. I can experiment. Failure is very cheap for me, which isn't always the case in the civil service.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Carole Freeman:** So then, you believe the work you are doing can complement the primary work that the State should be doing.

**Mr. Michael Mulley:** Certainly. I think the State...

**Mrs. Carole Freeman:** ...has a complementary role to play.

**Mr. Michael Mulley:** Yes. The State should be doing many things to get young people involved. I don't have any solutions to propose, but I do believe private citizens have a meaningful role to play.

**Mrs. Carole Freeman:** We witnessed in 2009 some political will on the part of leaders around the world to adopt more open and more proactive information disclosure practices. The election of Obama was one example. The governments of the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Finland and Mexico all moved to become truly open.

The order came from the top, because the political will must exist. The process moved very quickly in the United States, once the go-ahead was given. In a mere 45 days, the Data.gov website was up and running. On February 6, a request was made for information about all government activities. A response was forthcoming with the prescribed 60-day period. So then, the process is moving forward everywhere and proactive disclosure of information is proceeding smoothly and quickly.

Australia appears to be leading the way at this stage. You went to Australia, Mr. Moore. What difference did it make gathering the information on site rather than over the Internet or by videoconference? Did travelling to Australia change anything? What did you learn that you could bring back with you to Edmonton?

The problem stemmed from the fact that the States, the provinces, the municipalities and agencies all have different approaches.

Would you care to comment on what I've just said?

● (1605)

[*English*]

**Mr. Chris Moore:** Absolutely, it was very important to be there. I was invited to go and share what we were doing too. They had questions for me along the lines of what we were encountering. It was the same thing they were encountering, which was really cultural issues within the middle management of the civil service.

I had an opportunity to talk to Nicholas Gruen, the chair of their task force. Nicholas was just a business leader in Australia, but in being there and talking to them about how they did what they did, I realized that although Australia was similar to us in terms of being a Commonwealth country, their culture was very different. Moreover, what they do at a state and a local level is very different. From that opportunity to talk and really compare notes, the thing that I found was that they were as much interested in what we were doing at a local level, because it doesn't exist there yet, as I was in finding out what was happening at a national level there.

In comparison with what we are doing, they are absolutely further ahead. They are running into some challenges with the things they want to do next, as the public in Australia want better access to the Internet first, as there are some regulatory issues. People are saying "Don't give me open data; I want more Internet."

We're in a slightly different position. You talk about the Obama administration and the time it takes to do things, but if the City of Edmonton can pull together 12 data sets in three weeks and put up an open data catalogue, I think, given a little more time, we can do that at both the provincial and federal levels.

As I said earlier, I really believe that the people—the staff, the public servants—are ready to move. We just need that clear direction from the leadership.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Carole Freeman:** I'd like to ask another question, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Go ahead.

**Mrs. Carole Freeman:** What is the most important thing you learned in Australia as far as your project in Edmonton goes?

[*English*]

**Mr. Chris Moore:** The thing that was confirmed for me, which we were planning to do and had started to do and they had done, was engaging the community. They didn't just have a task force made up of civil servants and public sector people, but they had gone a number of times with web forums and Twitter and social media to engage people. So the engagement was the most important thing.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Carole Freeman:** Thank you, Mr. Moore.

Unfortunately, my time is up. I did have several more questions for you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mrs. Freeman.

[*English*]

Mr. Siksay, for seven minutes.

**Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Moore, and Mr. Mulley, for being here today. Your enthusiasm for your work is very helpful as we begin this study.

Mr. Moore, you mentioned you were working with other cities, that you were looking particularly at revisions to the licensing arrangements and the catalogue. I read somewhere about the Code for Canada organization. I'm wondering what the Code for Canada project is about and if it's related to what you are doing, and could you expand on the issues you're discussing with other cities?

**Mr. Chris Moore:** Absolutely, and I would just tell you that I love the Americans, and some of my relatives are American, but I'm also highly competitive. When I see good things happening, I want to adopt them.

As for the Code for Canada project, we're working on a partnership with a group in the U.S. called Code for America. Code for America was built on the same theory as Teach for America, in taking qualified, professional teachers and putting them in schools that need the teachers. So Code for America is doing something

similar, in taking qualified programmers and coders and helping them work on projects for cities across the U.S. We're in discussion with the other cities on that.

The first thing we decided we needed to do as a group of cities was to deal with the licence. The licence we have, we believe, is an open licence. It's an international licence. But some developers in the country have pointed out that it's not as open as it could be. Because Toronto and Ottawa use the same licence that Toronto and Vancouver do, we're working together. We have talked with CPIC in Ottawa and are doing some work with them. What we want to do or plan to do, as Mr. Mulley talked about, is to move to a creative commons licence. If you look at Australia and the work they're doing, as well as Seoul, in South Korea, they are very aggressive in moving towards that creative commons licence.

We, as a city, publish all of our pictures and YouTube videos under a creative commons licence. From my perspective, a couple of years ago all of the rules in the world changed during what Richard Florida calls "the great reset", and we are really in that open space. Cities, provinces, and national governments have that opportunity to share in it. So we are working very closely with our counterparts in Toronto, Ottawa, and Vancouver. We all face the same challenge, so we might as well put our resources to use and draw like solutions.

●(1610)

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** Mr. Moore, as I'm new to all of this, could you tell me specifically what the difference is between an open licence and a creative commons licence? What are the specific differences?

**Mr. Chris Moore:** We believed that our licence was open and gave people what they needed, but the creative commons is just a little more accurate in terms of use. It encourages more things, such as giving credits and in how they can be used. I'm not a lawyer, so you'd have to seek some clarity on that. We have some great lawyers with the city.

But there were some small things that were pointed out to us by some of the developers. We want to remove barriers, and we feel that the creative commons is.... The thing the creative commons provides is an international standard. So this is beyond Canada. The information flows, so we want to have a better alignment internationally.

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** Mr. Moore, how does it work when the city is making available its data and people are repurposing the data? Some people are going to make money on that. How does that work? What's the city's policy on the commercialization of these data? Perhaps you could say something about that.

**Mr. Chris Moore:** There are usually four things people ask me about: what about privacy, what about security, what about the money, and are people going to use the information against us? We have been charging for spatial data over the years. My perspective on it is that we are not in the business of making money on the sale of data. That's not our core business. The money has been collected through taxes or other funds to pay for the information. So over the last couple of years and going into next year, I'm actually removing the revenue from my budget on the sale of spatial data. We are not concerned about people making money on the use of our data. We call that economic development.

Even before we released our data—and Michael was sharing his story about Montreal, and I do everything I can to encourage them to release their transit data—we made our transit data available before our open data came along. It was in February of 2009. We did that because we were working with Google to put our transit data on Google for citizens. When we did that, we also released it on our website, and it's been updated every Thursday since February 18, 2009.

The neat thing that happened after we did that was that two local companies in Edmonton created applications. One, a small technology company, created an A-to-B routing map. Another, made up of three students from the University of Alberta in their second year, created an app to tell you when the next bus or LRT was coming. The really neat thing about that is that because the general transit data follows an international standard, those apps are actually being purchased around the world and used in other countries. For us, it's about economic development.

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** Do you have any sense of the difference between what you're forgoing as revenue in your department and the economic developments that are being created in the community? Do you have any sense of the numbers around that?

**Mr. Chris Moore:** I haven't stopped to study the numbers. To me, government has a responsibility to demystify government, and that's what our focus is. The District of Columbia, when they had their apps competition a couple of years ago, calculated that there was over $2 million of cost avoidance. In our apps competition this year, I didn't do that, because I just can't quantify it. But what I do know is that a number of software developers are selling applications at 99¢ and $1.99, and we're getting more information out to citizens. We're all about building a great city, and this just contributes to that.

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** Thank you.

Thank you, Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Siksay.

Mr. Albrecht, you have seven minutes.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Moore and Mr. Mulley.

Maybe I can just give two disclaimers before I ask any questions. First is that I wasn't part of the committee when the study was initiated, so I'm not privy to the.... Well, I shouldn't say I'm not privy to it, but I didn't take the time to go through all the word-for-word testimony from the three meetings in April. Second is that I don't

profess to be any type of technology expert, so some of my questions may seem rather elementary.

Mr. Mulley, you used terms like "open Parliament" and " repurposing", and you're convinced that repurposing could possibly increase participation in local government if you take some of that data. You talked, I believe, about your difficulty in Montreal in accessing the maps of the political jurisdictions. Their defence was that this was a mechanism for producing documents. In the material the commissioner presented to this committee earlier, one of her statements was that

> Open government is different from proactive disclosure.... It's a form of proactive disclosure, but open government means that you don't only disclose information, but you disclose it in a format that can be disaggregated, as data that can be reused, and people can use different technological applications to analyze this information.

I don't think I'm concerned about analyzing information. I think all of us around this committee room are eager to see more open government, more data online. But I guess the concern I have as a non-technical person is whether there isn't a risk of someone taking the data or the information and reformatting it into a format that could look official on the part of any government, be it municipal, provincial, or federal, and actually be misinforming the general public. Is that a risk at all, or is this something that's not even a point?

● (1615)

**Mr. Michael Mulley:** I don't think that releasing data increases the risk of fraud. One can always commit fraud, but I'm not aware of a single case of anything like this happening in any of the open data efforts worldwide. I don't see the incentive to do something like that, to the best of my knowledge.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht:** Mr. Moore, one of the statements you made was that you've changed your data sets to be more accessible. You used the example of PDF files, which you've changed now to make them more accessible. I just want to follow up on my previous question. Does the fact that they're not in PDF form make them more easily tinkered with, which could lead to possible misinformation, even if it's only a few key words?

**Mr. Chris Moore:** Absolutely. The question was raised with me when I presented our direction to counsel in January.

My response to that is that we always maintain the source data, so if something is changed, we can always go back to that. Moving away from PDF to machine-readable is just modern and makes sense. With our apps competition earlier this year, I was really hoping the Province of Alberta would join in releasing some data. They didn't, but the neat thing was that the apps developers actually scraped the data off the website, and have created apps for restaurant inspections and some of those things.

As I like to say to all orders of government, if you don't release your data, somebody will scrape it for you, and I think Mr. Mulley is a great example of that.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht:** In relation to this committee gathering more information from a large cross-section of the Canadian public, you indicated there are multiple public servants who are eager, ready, and equipped to give us that information. This committee is interested in going beyond simply the public service. The other obligation we have is to collect this in a format that the committee can use in both official languages.

Do you have recommendations as to how we can do that effectively and really get a good cross-section of input, but at the same time respect the budget restrictions that this places us under?

**Mr. Chris Moore:** That's an excellent question.

One of the other unique things for Canada in the whole global open government movement is our multilingual approach and needs, and respecting that.

Let me step back a bit. There is something happening that is called "intrinsic motivation". Mr. Mulley is an example of that. People will just do things because it's the right thing to do. With respect to budget restrictions, I think you would have no trouble finding people in this country to participate—not just the public servants who are ready to move but private industry as well as private individuals. We use the analogy of barn-raising in the west. We don't raise too many barns together any more, but we're actually doing it together as an intrinsic community as we are releasing data and creating apps to make it useful. The people and the country are ready to step up.

●(1620)

**Mr. Harold Albrecht:** Is there a risk on the up side, that if we get flooded with millions of submissions, we wouldn't actually be able to wade through them all, and possibly create expectations that are unrealistic for us to meet?

**Mr. Chris Moore:** I understand what you're saying. It's always a risk any time you engage people in that. I don't know how you operate or function, but I don't know if you can have a working group and they could do that work. There's clearly a lot of information that would need to be brought together, looking at other models. There are really only four other countries in the world that have done anything, and three of the four are in the Commonwealth. So that aligns with our approach to government.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht:** Do I have any time left, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** You have one minute.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht:** Just quickly then, you mentioned a number of cities that have already gone this route, and you mentioned the U.K. and Australia. Are you aware of any Canadian provinces that are already using this open government in the way you described it?

**Mr. Chris Moore:** My understanding is the provinces of Ontario and British Columbia have work under way. British Columbia released information about climate change. Those are the only two I'm aware of.

**The Chair:** We're now going to start the second round of five minutes each.

Mr. Easter, for five minutes.

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, folks, for making the presentations.

Mr. Mulley, your enthusiasm is catching. It certainly makes one want to look into this further.

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett:** He just saw your site.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Yes, I just saw the site, which I didn't know existed and which knows more about me than I do myself, which is maybe not a good thing.

In any event, Mr. Mulley, you called it "repurposing", and Mr. Moore talked about "scraped the data", in different circumstances. You are trying to use data for more open purposes, but to use it—as Carolyn said earlier—to get an assessment of the conditions in a certain area and if there is an impact on health care, etc. Could both of you expand on that?

On the other side of that coin, how do you prevent misleading information from getting out there? I just came back from a meeting in the United States that looked at that system. Ours is bad. Theirs is worse, in terms of one side trying to tear the other down with information that's not exactly accurate.

**Mr. Michael Mulley:** Certainly that's a political problem, but I'm not convinced that releasing data will contribute to that. There is certainly no shortage of inaccurate information being sent by people in news media all around the world. I think providing more information that is raw in terms of data and relatively free of interpretation makes it that much more likely for people to be able to see information at the source and to make up their own mind, in one sense.

Talking about repurposing is also important. One of the defining facts of this age is the glut of information we're all faced with, which makes it easier in some ways for misleading things to get in. One of the great benefits of data, meaning something that is computer-readable, is that you are that much more able to search through it, to get the bits that interest you, to repurpose, to find what's relevant to you.

It's definitely a challenge of the times with the amount of data we are facing and trying to make accurate sense out of it, but I think more information from government is a good thing.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** I will come to Mr. Moore in a minute.

We're dealing with one factor of the question in the House today, and that is doing away with the mandatory census. We see that as an extremely serious issue: your data is not going to be as accurate. How do you get around that? I'll turn to Mr. Moore, and then maybe Mr. Mulley can think about that.

Go ahead, Mr. Moore.

● (1625)

**Mr. Chris Moore:** On your question about information and people creating stories, the best example for me is that Canadians always talk about the weather, everywhere they go. Environment Canada has been releasing weather information since the late 1800s, so they kind of started this whole thing. When the information is available, then people can talk about it and analyze it. When you don't release your data you create a void of information, and when there is a void people will always make up a story.

My experience has always been that the story is pathologic, so if you want the opportunity to get the story out then you release the data. All we're saying is that if you release it in a machine-readable format, over PDF or text, then it's much more useful for people in a broader way.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Mr. Moore, you said we need clear direction from the leadership, so what is required? What has to be done to get to where we have to go in terms of access to information, and data getting out there, and it being accurate data? I mean, I can't underline enough the concerns we have about the census.

**Mr. Chris Moore:** The accurate data comes from the source. The source is managed by the people who own and maintain the data. For us, three things have worked: political sponsorship, administrative leadership, and community engagement.

I've been in Ottawa many times this year, and as a Canadian I'm embarrassed by the state we are in compared to other countries. When I'm there I'm always tweeting at people to say we need to do something. The sad thing is that the last time I was there for GTEC I talked about open government, because it's part of open data, and I was told by a number of staff that they're not allowed to talk about open government, they can only talk about open data.

So there needs to be some heart-to-heart discussion somewhere, and there needs to be the political sponsorship, the administrative leadership, and community engagement.

I was very excited with the invitation from the clerk last week. The work you are doing encourages me, but like anything there need to be some outcomes and some direction. I think it's possible; you just need that.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Easter.

Ms. Davidson, for five minutes.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Thanks very much to Mr. Moore and Mr. Mulley for being here with us this afternoon.

As you can see from the questions you are getting, this is something we are all pretty excited about, but I don't think too many of us have much expertise in this. We're grasping on how we approach this and what the parameters of the study would be.

Mr. Moore, you said something that caught my attention: that people couldn't talk about open government but they could talk about open data. So far we have been calling our study "open government".

I am wondering if both of you could tell me what open government means to each you, why it's important to you, and why it should be important to Canadians.

Mr. Moore, do you want to start?

**Mr. Chris Moore:** Absolutely.

One of the things I like to say is that in Edmonton, open government is not new. We've been doing it since 1905, when we joined Confederation.

Using technology enables us to have a deeper level of engagement. If you look at some of the issues in Edmonton over the last little while, whether at the municipal airport or the downtown arena, there have been the traditional public meetings but also a whole host of online social media. So to me, open government is doing what we've always done in this country at all levels of government; but now, with the technology enabling us to have a deeper level of engagement and faster engagement, we leverage it.

Why is it important to Canadians? First of all, we're standing still right now. If we keep standing still and everybody else is moving forward, we are going to move back. We need to do something. As I said earlier, we had a leadership position in the 1990s around e-government and we've lost it. I think it's easy to regain. It's important for national pride, from a heritage perspective. We have done so many great things in this country that other people have taken as theirs—basketball, hockey, insulin—and we have had huge leadership in the use of technology in government, and I think we just need to get back to a leadership position.

● (1630)

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** Mr. Mulley.

**Mr. Michael Mulley:** To me, open government means a government whose default posture is one of collaboration and cooperation, recognizing that technology enables many more people to comment and participate in the workings of government, and government that is always ready to see where it can spark innovation and that capitalizes on the innovation of others.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** Thank you both.

One of the things I've been questioning, as we've had this discussion here this afternoon, is that we talk about having a readable format. Absolutely, I think that if we're going to produce the data, they have to be in a usable format. But one concern I have relates to what I think Mr. Mulley talked about in giving an example of some data on health issues, and perhaps some rates of illness, and so on. So do you think that anybody can just take those data and analyze them? You don't think there's any danger in that?

**Mr. Michael Mulley:** I'm not necessarily sure what the dangers would be. Assuming that privacy issues aren't at play and nothing is personally identifiable, then no. We're talking in slightly broad terms here, but I believe it absolutely should be the case that researchers—even someone who has training but not necessarily institutional affiliation, and who is interested in looking at rates of illness in Canada—are able to look into that.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** So these would be specialized people who would be looking at the data and drawing conclusions that would be used in their field, for example?

**Mr. Michael Mulley:** Sure, but increasingly the word "specialized" means something like training in statistics and access to the Internet. Of course the people who will want to do this will have a particular interest in the field. We're talking slightly in generalizations, but I think the ability to get at the data, as long as there are no privacy issues for society, is something that could really spark data literacy, an interest in how the country works, and how to make it better among citizens, which I think is a wonderful thing.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** I also wanted to ask you about protecting the integrity of the information. I know that is something that has been brought up many times with me, and certainly I think some Canadians have a great fear of that.

Is there an ability for people to take this machine-readable information and change the data in any way?

**Mr. Michael Mulley:** I'm not sure, but largely there's not an incentive to do so. Is my site destroying the integrity of the data when I make it searchable by someone's name? Some people might say yes, but I would say that makes it more useful.

I could certainly go in and change what people said on my site. Then someone would quickly notice and no one would ever visit it again, and the official government data source would keep its integrity and remain the official source of data.

I don't see too may risks of this happening.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Davidson.

[*Translation*]

Go ahead, Mr. St-Cyr.

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Mulley. First all, I'd like to congratulate you on your website. I sympathize with you over the problems you had reading Hansard. It's not always easy, even for mere mortals. Sometimes I have trouble finding my own statements in Hansard. That says a lot.

I'd like to know if you have observed that people logging on to your website to get information are looking for something different. Let me explain what I mean.

A number of MPs are concerned about specific issues, in particular those who live in urban areas like mine where there really isn't any local media. People can get a lot of information about their leaders and about the parties, but very little about their MP. This criticism about the state of democracy in our society is one that we often hear.

For example, are people looking for something more by way of information from a website like yours than what they would find in the media in general? Are those logging on to the website focused mainly on the parties and their leaders? Or are people more interested in their own MP, in his comments and actions?

● (1635)

**Mr. Michael Mulley:** Users of the website are in fact very interested in MPs. This is one of the great opportunities that the website data affords the Bloc Québécois. It provides information on party activities closer to home. When I'm in Montreal, the local newspapers cover events happening on the Island. However, the website provides specifics on what my MP said in Parliament or in the National Assembly, something that a local newspaper won't cover.

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr:** Still on the same subject, there is much discussion today in the traditional media of the instantaneous nature of information and of the way in which people view current news and data from a short-term perspective. Do you think a website like yours, Facebook entries and other blogs only serve to emphasize this approach?

I'm thinking here about Facebook, because I use this medium a great deal. Naturally, my entries are in chronological order. Anyone wishing to review my profile can see what I've been up to, but won't get much of a long-term perspective.

Is there any basis for this concern? Since people decide for themselves how they will be using the data, shouldn't this be an opportunity to possibly give them a more long-term perspective of an MP's or government's accomplishments? How do think this affects how people perceive their work in the short-term?

**Mr. Michael Mulley:** That is a very interesting question. I don't think we give this much thought when we look to publish data. It comes down to the perception of Internet users. It's interesting, but I don't know what people are thinking.

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr:** For example, if a website provides election-related information, the latest speeches and articles, it is choosing to provide a short-term snapshot of the situation. However, a programmer or historian could take that same data and use it to make a historical presentation spanning a longer period of time. Ultimately, the individual decides how that information will be used and presented.

**Mr. Michael Mulley:** That's right. Because the data is public, different kinds of presentations are possible.

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr:** I'd like to stay on the subject of data and the criticisms that have been levelled.

WikiLeaks has been in the news a lot these days. I don't want to get into the politics of this issue, but one thing we're constantly hearing about in the news is these hundreds of pages of information. Of what use is this massive amount information to the average person, or even to an expert? The same can be said of Hansard. If you ever have the opportunity to visit the Speaker's Salon off the back corridor, you will find a library filled with copies of Hansard. The same information can be accessed on the website.

I have a question that I already know the answer to, but I'd still like to get your opinion. Could the availability of so much information cloud the real issue and make it even harder for members of the public to access information that is truly useful?

[*English*]

**Mr. Michael Mulley:** That's one of the great challenges of the years we're living in right now. Our society and our professional lives are increasingly about dealing with these huge gluts of information. That's why a lot of the focus of industry, of Internet companies, of technology is increasingly on finding ways to deal with the glut of information and make data useful. That's one of the reasons I talk about the innovation that releasing data makes possible. Finding what's valuable in data is a future of the digital economy.

So yes, I'm scared and fascinated by the huge quantities of information we're all increasingly expected to process, but the only way forward is to find solutions and find ways as a society that we can deal with the information. Releasing data is one of the best routes to that.

● (1640)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. St-Cyr.

[*English*]

Ms. Block, five minutes.

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I join my colleagues in welcoming you here today, and agree with Mr. Siksay, Mr. Mulley, when he comments on your passion for open government and the repurposing and redistributing of information. It's very evident. My questions, though, will be for Mr. Moore. If you feel you have something you would like to offer, I'm open to that as well.

First of all, Mr. Moore, you mentioned the need to engage the community, and the question you needed to have answered is who is the community? When your municipality determined to move to an open government model, how did you go about determining who the community was?

**Mr. Chris Moore:** Excellent question.

When I had to respond to the council inquiry and write a report, the first thing I did was I went to the social media world and I asked who would like to collaborate. It was one of the first council reports that was collaboratively written. We had 39 people from across North America. My challenge was to take all that information and turn it into a format that would be presentable to council and still maintain the integrity of the source information.

When we went to the community, we went twice: once in November 2009 and once in March 2010. We just went out. We asked anybody who was interested in this to please come.

The first meeting we had was more city staff and a few technology experts who knew we were working on it, so there were about 45 people for a population of 850,000. At the second meeting we had in March of this year we had over 120 people. We webcast it in English and in French, and we had 50 people over the web. The archives of all that are still online. We had people from across the country.

At the second meeting we wanted people—not just the technology people, we wanted people in other levels of government, academia, just regular people. We did end up with that.

It's just engaging in the conversation. People are more interested in talking about the usefulness of the data. The developers want the data, they're going to make applications, but the people want to know how that will tell them tomorrow that their garbage needs to go out. That's one of the applications that was created as well.

It was an open invitation.

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** Okay, so that's a good segue into my next question. How did you determine or what criteria did you use in determining what data would be of high value to your constituents?

**Mr. Chris Moore:** We had a lot of information on our website, and it was in non-readable formats, PDFs and text. We also looked at the number of calls to our 311. People were looking for information. We wanted it to be driven by the public, as opposed to the city believing this is what they needed. Again, we went for things we knew people were looking for: transit schedules, waste pickup, neighbourhood boundaries, road closures. Some things are really practical that we know people are looking for.

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** I used to be the mayor of a very small community, so the whole notion of open government wasn't that difficult.

As a city council, did you experience any increased costs in moving toward the open government model?

**Mr. Chris Moore:** No, we didn't. Actually, we've seen some cost savings. For example, we made the schedule available. There are multiple applications now, and our transit people have recorded fewer calls from people asking about the bus. When's the bus coming? What's the schedule? I can't tell you that they're printing any fewer paper copies of the schedule, but there's an opportunity.

In terms of where we're running, our open data catalogue runs in "the cloud" which is just the Internet. It's public information, so we have it publicly available. That didn't cost anything either. We like to be cost-conscious, frugal. It's great. If you're going to have open data, then it might as well be in an open format. I like our data catalogue. It is not behind our firewall; it is out in the public domain.

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** Thank you.

Do I have any more time?

**The Chair:** You can ask a small question.

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** I want to ask Mr. Mulley a quick question.

Do you anticipate or foresee any changes that will need to be made to our current legislation—privacy, access to information, or more specifically PIPEDA?

● (1645)

**Mr. Michael Mulley:** This may be a question for Mr. Moore. I'm far from a legislative expert; I'm a computer programmer.

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** Okay.

Mr. Moore.

**Mr. Chris Moore:** I too am far from being a legislative expert, but I spent a lot of time with our Privacy Commissioner. From a Canadian perspective, I think the answer is probably yes, only because Australia went through some of that. It's more about providing clarity on what is private and what is public.

The great thing about open data is that it really starts to solidify what is open and publicly available, and also draws some really clear lines for what is private. So I would say it probably does. There are some things that need to be changed, because new definitions needs to be inserted into the legislation.

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** Okay.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Block.

Dr. Bennett.

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett:** Thanks very much.

As you know, the committee is planning to hold e-consultations so we can actually open this process up in terms of the kinds of things Mr. Moore has talked about. Today David Eaves posted some advice to the committee on his website in an open letter advising us how to proceed. I guess we would like people to look at that advice and respond to it. But as we formalize a work plan for this committee, we would also like ongoing advice on not only what we end up recommending, but on how we do it, to make sure we get the best possible report we can have.

**The Chair:** I don't know if you're aware or not, but that letter has been translated and circulated to all members.

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett:** So the letter has been translated, and I think we will be able to post the link on the committee website. Is that correct? If not, it's on mine. As we go forward we are trying to make a big push, not only for what we do here in Parliament, but how we do it, in terms of being much more bottom-up and open.

As you advise us on what we will be able to do on the committee website, are there other places, whether it's GTEC or something to do with your site, Mr. Mulley, at openparliament.ca? Eventually there will be a list of all of the consultations going on by government at the same time. It will be a kind of guidepost, if people are interested in participating in a democracy between elections, on where the openness is for them to play, or to advise or consult.

Over the next little while perhaps you will have advice on sites we should be notified of, sites where we should be participating, or sites that should be directed to our process. I think the more robust our process, the better reports we're going to get, and the more we can help with moving it.

I don't know if you have any advice right now, or whether you will get back to us with the kinds of things you need. But certainly if you want to send an open letter as to how we should proceed, we would welcome that as well.

**Mr. Michael Mulley:** I assure you there'll be significant online interest in a consultation on this matter. I and many other people will do whatever we can to get the word out.

**Mr. Chris Moore:** I saw that Mr. Eaves posted very early this morning in Vancouver. I was quite impressed.

There are some things he's recommending to you there from the work Australia did with their government task force. There's probably work you need to do that may recommend something. The thing is whether you as a committee can figure out how to engage in the social media conversations.

I was in Manila a couple of weeks ago—invited there by FutureGov—speaking to local government officials and national officials. I basically told them in my presentation, "You need to be part of the conversation, because it's happening without you".

If you can figure out how to connect into the social media conversation.... I don't know if it's possible for the committee to have a Twitter account, but if you can do that you can engage other people.

After I saw David's post this morning and read it, I tweeted it to my over 1,400 Twitter followers and put a couple of hashtags on it so it got to the right search engines.

●(1650)

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett:** What hashtag did you use?

**Mr. Chris Moore:** I think I added gov 2.0. I may have used GoC3 for the group that was there. You need to connect not just with the technology people, but with average, everyday citizens. That has been part of our challenge. All I would say is the community is there, Mr. Mulley, Mr. Eaves, other people, and I would love to have the opportunity to continue to help, encourage, and support.

I'm on the advisory committee for a group called Lac Carling. They've met for the last 15 years. It's a gathering of leaders in technology and service delivery, and it's going to be on their agenda.

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Dr. Bennett.

That concludes the questions.

I'm going to ask Mr. Mulley and Mr. Moore if they have any final comments they want to make to the committee. We're going to suspend and go in camera after they are through.

Mr. Mulley, are there any concluding remarks you want to make to the committee?

**Mr. Michael Mulley:** Just that I am excited to see that the study is taking place. It's great to hear that you plan on making a very consultative effort to see what's happening with Canadians. I hope you move quickly. I hope that Canada can regain a position of prominence in online government. I hope there is action as soon as possible and we'll get to see a lot of important outcomes and innovation coming from it.

**The Chair:** Mr. Moore, do you have any final or concluding comments?

**Mr. Chris Moore:** Thank you.

An opportunity like this to pull all of the work under way that needs to be done together is absolutely something that unifies. I thank you for the opportunity to speak.

As I was listening to the conversation, you've already started that engagement. Your challenge is to find all the right people to talk to and also provide some leadership.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** On behalf of everyone on the committee, I want to thank you both. As Dr. Bennett has indicated, don't hesitate to continue the dialogue if you have any afterthoughts you want to leave with the committee. Just send them to the clerk, and the clerk will have them translated and circulated to all members of the committee.

That concludes this part of the meeting.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]