

## **Where has all the data gone?**

Using citizen created tools in reference,  
research and instruction

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## **Shutdown near? Have no fear – Citizen tools are near**

- Agenda:
  - Explaining the data flood
  - Examples of citizen created tools
  - Learning more and keeping up
  - Participants' contributions

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# Why data?

- The 2009 Obama Transparency Memorandum<sup>[1]</sup> resulted in the creation deposit of government created data into a single access point on the data.gov portal.
- Behind this initiative is the hope that data will make government more transparent, less corrupt and create a revolution in how we govern<sup>[2]</sup>
- In reality we have more data than we know what to do with<sup>[3]</sup> still, our use of these sources in growing<sup>[4]</sup>

# How much data is there really?

[Global index <http://global.census.okfn.org/> ]

Rank	Dataset	Breakdown	Location (URL)	Format	Info	Prev. (2013)	Score
1	Government Budget		<a href="http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/">http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/...</a>	XLS, CSV, ...		#1 100%	100%
1	Legislation		<a href="http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/bulkd...">http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/bulkd...</a>	XML		#1 100%	100%
1	National Statistics		<a href="http://www.census.gov/">http://www.census.gov/</a>	XLS, CSV, ...		#1 100%	100%
1	National Map		<a href="http://viewer.nationalmap.gov/">http://viewer.nationalmap.gov/...</a>	shape		#1 100%	100%
8	Postcodes / Zipcodes		<a href="http://www.census.gov/geo/maps...">http://www.census.gov/geo/maps...</a>	TSV, SHP		#1 100%	90%
13	Pollutant Emissions		<a href="http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/e...">http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/e...</a>	CSV, dbf, ...		#1 100%	70%
16	Government Spending		n/a	n/a		#4 90%	10%
22	Election Results		<a href="http://www.fec.gov/pubrec/elec...">http://www.fec.gov/pubrec/elec...</a>	XLS, PDF		#1 100%	70%
24	Transport Timetables		<a href="http://www.amtrak.com/train-sc...">http://www.amtrak.com/train-sc...</a>	n/a		#6 75%	45%
70	Company Register		n/a	n/a		#54 5%	15%

# Example I: Aggregated projects

- Influence Explorer  
<http://influenceexplorer.com/>
- Congressional Data  
<http://congressionaldata.org/>

**Real-Time Federal Campaign Finance**

Overview | Newest Filings | Presidential | Races | Outside Spending | PACs | Data | About

**NEWEST FILINGS** Last updated: Oct. 2, 2015 8:32 a.m.

Find and filter electronic campaign finance filings made to the Federal Election Commission in the 2013/14 and 2015/16 cycles. Use the tabs below to filter and sort the type of filings shown. Only House candidates who have raised money are shown in the candidate dropdown menu. For more details, see the about page.  
**Senate candidates do not file electronic reports.**

Quick Filters: All Today | Independent Expenditures | Candidate Committees | Super PACs | Party Committees

Candidate:  Committee:

Committee type:  Date filed:  Period:  Year:

Filing type:  Minimum report:

Order by:  Amendments:

Total of 12 results found. Showing 1-12. [Download a CSV file of all 12 results.](#)

Filing ID (Type)	Committee Form	Coverage Date	Raised	Spent	Cash on hand	New Loans	Filing Date
132135 Month/quarterly report (INDEPENDENT)	JONES FOR CONGRESS	6/1/15 - 6/30/15	\$714,747	\$377,282	\$331,911	\$0	10/15 05:42 PM

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HACKPAD

## Congressional Legislative Data Tools

### Congressional Legislative Data Tools

Committee Meeting Calendar  
While you *could* pay \$1000 annually to subscribe to a daily calendar of committee hearings, GovTrack publishes an automatically-updated [calendar](#) that lists all hearings and meetings in the House in Senate at no cost to you. Alternatively, subscribe to [GovTrack's alerts](#), which tracks particular committees and bills.

Follow House Floor Action  
The app [Capitol Bells](#) tells you whenever there is a House floor vote and provides essential context (such as what the vote is on). Used by more than half the Members of the House, it's an essential tool to keep an eye on the floor.

Google Alerts for Government (but not Google)  
The Sunlight Foundation's alert tool [Scout](#) is the most powerful way to be alerted to government actions. It sends email alerts based on your keywords for federal and state legislation, federal regulations, floor speeches, GAO Reports, IG reports, and some federal court opinions. It's like having a staff of well-paid research assistants constantly hitting refresh on dozens of congressional websites.

Collaboratively Write the Bill  
Public input on legislation is often useful but only with the recent launch of [Madison](#) is there a free tool that allows broad public engagement while retaining control of the document. Built by the OpenGov Foundation, it is open source and used by Congress and the White House.

Read the Bill  
While Congress' redesign of its legislative information system has brought many needed improvements, it still lacks a lot of important contextual information. [GovTrack](#) has provided legislative information for a decade and should be your first stop. If you're interested in the

name / email

WITH DANIEL SCHUMAN

- CONGRESSIONAL LEGISLATI...
- COMMITTEE MEETING CALE...
- FOLLOW HOUSE FLOOR AC...
- GOOGLE ALERTS FOR GOVE...
- COLLABORATIVELY WRITE T...
- READ THE BILL
- READ THE LAW
- CONGRESSIONAL STAFF DI...
- VOTE COMPARISON TOOL
- CONGRESS HTTPS DASHBO...
- SENATE CAPITOL BELLS

<http://hackpad.com>

## Example II: LegEx.org

- Legislative Explorer <http://LegEx.org> is an “interactive visualization that allows anyone to explore actual patterns of lawmaking in Congress.” Follow bill progress from the beginning to the end of a two year Congress.
- Filter by topic, type of legislation, chamber, party, member, back to 1973.
- Search for a specific bill or representative.
  - Creators: [John Wilkerson](#), Nick Stramp, Christian Marc Schmidt, and Sergei Larionov (University of Washington).

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The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the University of Washington website. The page features a purple header with the 'W' logo and navigation links for 'Students', 'Parents', 'Faculty & Staff', and 'Alumni'. Below the header is a white navigation bar with links for 'OFFICE OF NEWS & INFORMATION', 'UW CLASSIFIEDS', 'UW EXPERTS', 'ALL STORIES', and 'MEDIA CONTACTS'. The main content area is titled 'UW TODAY' and dated 'April 25, 2014'. The primary article is titled 'Online 'Legislative Explorer' uses big data to track decades of lawmaking' by Peter Kelley. The article text describes how political scientist John Wilkerson has created a new online tool for tracking lawmaking. A 'Latest news' sidebar on the right lists three other articles: 'Scientists: Let wildfires burn when prudent', 'A Q & A with Pedro Domingos: Author of 'The Master Algorithm'', and 'Reuters names UW the world's most innovative public university, fourth overall'. The page number '8' is visible in the bottom right corner of the screenshot.

Legislative Explorer

legex.org

# LEG/EX

Legislative Explorer:  
Data Driven Discovery

A one of a kind interactive visualization that allows anyone to explore actual patterns of lawmaking in Congress.

**Get the 'big picture'**  
Compare the bills and resolutions introduced by Senators and Representatives and follow their progress from the beginning to the end of a two year Congress.

**Dive deeper**  
Filter by topic, type of legislation, chamber, party, member, or even search for a specific bill.

**Want to learn more about the legislative process?**  
[The Legislative Process](#) from the Library of Congress  
[Who's your Representative or Senator?](#)  
[LegSim](#) — a student run simulation for government courses

**Launch**

Data updated: 09/28/15 12:27 AM PDT

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legex.org/heap.html

Legislative Explorer Data Driven Discovery

Tutorial | Data | Donate

113th Congress (2013-2014) ▾ Senators ▾ Represent

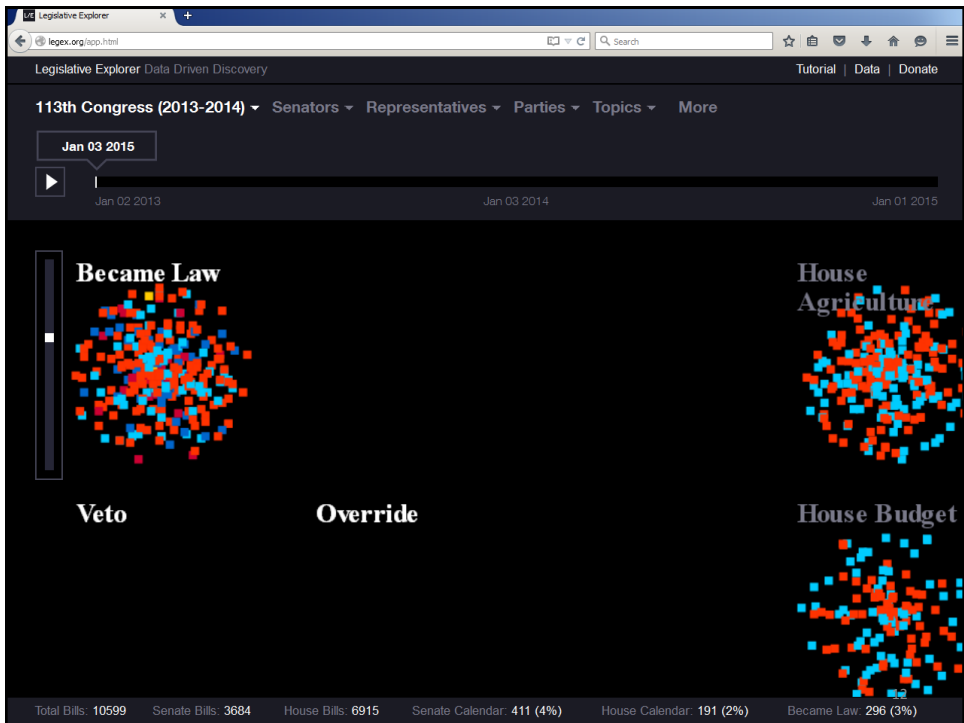
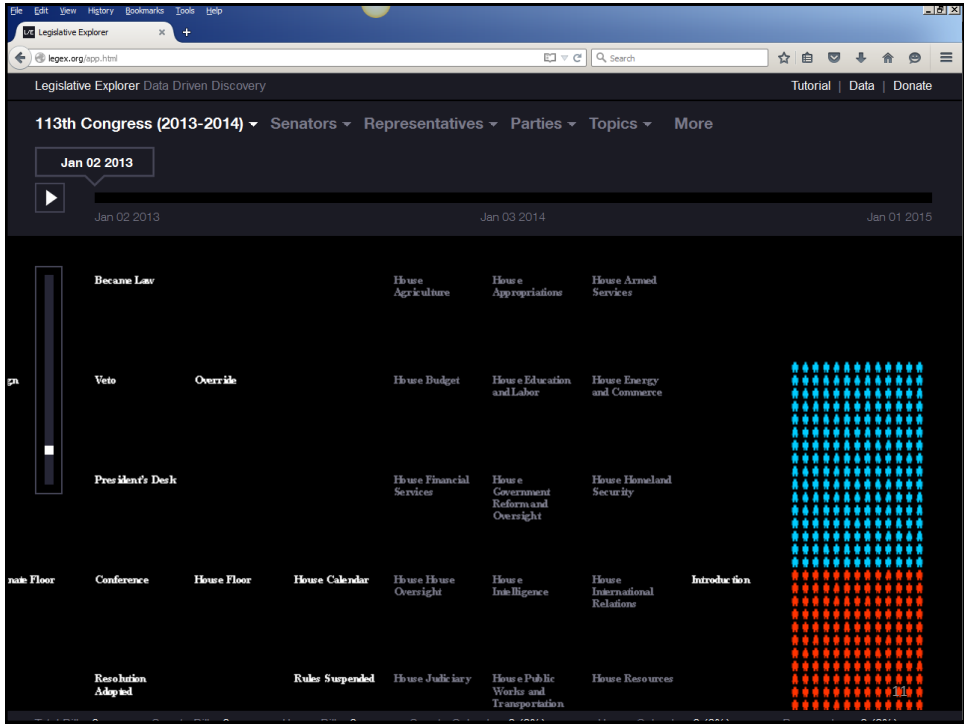
Jan 02 2013

▶

Jan 02 2013      Jan 03 2014      Jan 01 2015

**Became Law**

Total Bills: 0      Senate Bills: 0      House Bills: 0      10



Total Bills: 10599    Senate Bills: 3684    House Bills: 6915

Senate Calendar: 411 (4%)

House Calendar: 191 (2%)    Became Law: 296 (3%)

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## Example III: Tracking the government

- [GovTrack.US](#) : The site helps ordinary citizens find and track bills in the U.S. Congress and understand their representatives' legislative record.
- [Open check book](#): Which government agencies spend the most money? Who is receiving that money and what are they spending it on?

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## Example IV: Open City

- A suite of tools for resident of Chicago: “We are a group that create [apps](#) with [open data](#) to improve transparency and understanding of our government. “
- <http://opencityapps.org/>

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## Example V: [Stats America](#)

- Your one-stop destination for economic development data sites and tools.
- Created by Indiana University's Kelley School of Business “the goal of StatsAmerica is to provide actionable data for economic developers to use in site requests, developing metrics, grant writing and strategic planning.”

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## Digital dust

- Be aware that many of these projects have a short shelf life for various reasons. Always check to see if the site/tool are continuously maintained and updated.
- The Sunlight Foundation regularly updates their list as project retire (ex: [Docket Wrench](#)).
- Recent casualties:
  - This We Know (<http://www.thisweknow.org/>): allowed users to explore government data about their community
  - Data Masher (<http://www.datamasher.org/>): let users mashup two different data sources and share/comment on others <https://twitter.com/datamasher>

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## GovPulse turns to dust

- GovPulse (<http://govpulse.us/>), a lovely, enhanced interface to the *Federal Register*, went dormant in Jan 2013 (still looks deceptively alive at first glance)
- Three developers Andrew, Dave and Bob won 2<sup>nd</sup> place in a Sunlight Foundation competition. Because of GovPulse, they were recruited to help design [FederalRegister.gov](#).

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## Keeping up, keeping current: Updates from the federal government

- Digitalgov.gov - A service from the GSA with the mission of “scouring the innerwebs for digital info so you don’t have to. Expect posts on what government is doing in digital, general digital news, trends and issues on implementing digital for the public.



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## Keeping up, keeping current: Projects from an advocacy group

- The Sunlight Foundation, a non-for-profit organization “that uses the [tools](#) of civic tech, open data, policy analysis and journalism to make our government and politics more accountable and transparent to all.



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Keeping up, keeping current:

## GovLab Digest

(NYU & MacArthur Foundation)

- The weekly digest is an easy way to get summary information on different projects, research and other initiatives relating to transparency in governance.
- The Oct. 1 issue included items about the International Open Data Charter, Open Science revolution and more
- GovLab <http://thegovlab.org/>
- [Link](#) (to digest)

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Keeping up, keeping current:

## Be Specific

- From the owner of LLRX, this blog provides “accurate, focused research, highlighting primary government documents from around the world” and includes reviews and many citizen created data tools
- <http://www.bespacific.com/>

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# References

- [1] Obama Transparency Memorandum (2009, Feb. 24)  
[https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/memoranda\\_fy2009/m09-12.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/memoranda_fy2009/m09-12.pdf)
- [2] Can The Open-Data Revolution Change Our Democracies? (2014, Jan 31). *Ted Radio Hour*.  
<http://www.npr.org/2014/01/31/265694831/can-the-open-data-revolution-change-our-democracies>
- [3] Scott M. Fulton (2012, May 10). US Government Has More “Big Data” Than It Knows What to Do With. *Readwrite*.  
<http://readwrite.com/2012/05/10/us-government-has-more-big-data-than-it-knows-what-to-do-with>
- [4] Grouping Users of Open Data and Open Government Applications (2015, April 21). Pew Research Center.  
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