

OPENLOCAL OPEN-SOURCE SOFTWARE THAT BUILDS COMMUNITIES

A NEW MODEL FOR DIGITAL SERVICES

The last few years we have seen technology giants like Alphabet and Uber expand into areas of civic infrastructure, including transportation and urban planning. In some ways, this is a good thing: innovative companies with capital to invest can move quickly and, in theory, are good at solving user problems. But private companies, almost by definition, have a profit motive, which means somebody has to pay for all that investment and innovation. Even so-called 'free' platforms, we now understand, are paid for with our data and privacy, the worst examples being what author Shoshana Zuboff calls 'Surveillance Capitalism'.

Another popular narrative is that governments aren't very good at technology, that governments are ill-informed, move too slowly and procurement is overly bureaucratic. In truth, government investment is often directly responsible for the magical technologies we've credited to big tech. Canada's investments in AI research through CIFAR in the early 1980's directly led to the pioneering work of Geoffrey Hinton, Yoshua Bengio and Yann LeCun. Apple is praised for 'inventing' the iPhone, but as Mariana Mazzucato writes in *The Entrepreneurial State*, "All the technologies which make the iPhone 'smart' are also state-funded ... the internet, wireless networks, GPS, microelectronics, touchscreen displays and the latest voice-activated SIRI personal assistant."

Our goal with OpenLocal is to bridge these two worlds. Our founders are technologists, software builders and academics that have built software businesses and understand the effective application of technology, but also strongly believe in the importance of government and the digital empowerment of cities and towns. We will work with all levels of government on vision and strategy while designing, prototyping and launching software that improves cities, supports businesses and provides quality of life improvements to citizens.

OpenLocal leverages 'startup expertise' and rapidly scalable, inexpensive cloud services to create platforms and applications that support government strategies of job creation and economic diversity, access to transportation and support for small businesses. We see these services as 'digital infrastructure' - not standalone apps but a new layer of digital services, available as a public good, analogous to roads and pipes and snow removal services. This is open-source software, built for cities, accessible in a way that creates a fair and equitable relationship with the users: businesses, neighbours, you.

OPENLOCAL DELIVERY

OpenLocal Delivery is an open-source platform that provides communities with the software and tools to support local businesses with fast, local delivery. It's designed to complement both low-tech 'over-the-phone' orders and goods sold online through ubiquitous SMS messaging, or a smartphone app. Our platform supports local businesses with affordable delivery, provides fair-wage opportunities for delivery people, and ensures that money continues to circulate locally, helping communities thrive.

OPENTRANSIT

OpenTransit is a turnkey ridesharing platform for municipalities interested in adding ridesharing to their public transportation services. In the near term, the development of OpenTransit would provide immediate opportunities for Canadian municipalities to implement a microtransit solution that they can customize to their specific needs and retain 100% of the revenue. It also provides the business model for local tech jobs and a path for growth, including the development of well-paid tech jobs in smaller centres.

GET INVOLVED

OpenLocal is committed to providing affordable, sustainable digital infrastructure and services to cities, towns and municipal organizations. We believe that by developing open source digital tools and providing frameworks that can be adapted for local use, we can create better access to services, improve economic resiliency, create employment opportunities and support local digital skills development. If you're interested in talking to us about OpenTransit or OpenLocal Delivery, please send us an email.