

bit.ly/odk-vision

Notes for readers from Shauna: I took the notes from our earlier discussion and attempted to write them up into a mission statement. I have largely ignored the question of the specific ways in which ODK currently is or is not living up to this theoretical mission statement, as I feel the statement of values and priorities comes first. Please feel free to leave comments on the doc. Critique and suggestions are welcome, but please keep things polite, and remember we're talking at a very high level - questions of implementation are off topic here.

Open Question: are folks interested in working on the mission statement as part of a session tomorrow? (Leave comments of +1 ("Yes!"), -1 ("No"), 0 ("Fine either way"))

Draft 'Mission Statement'

From website: *Our goals are to make open source and standards-based tools which are easy to try, easy to use, easy to modify, and easy to scale.*

The core purpose of the ODK project is to provide a high-quality [] tool for capturing [aggregating, curating, and visualizing?] digital data to organizations and communities[]. To achieve this broad purpose, we prioritize the following goals/values:

- Support: Because many of our users and user-organizations are non-technical, it's important that we **provide technical support and advice** to the community. We also seek to provide operational support, although this is a lower priority for us than technical support.
- Usability: In addition to general software usability and accessibility, we seek to meet the specific needs of our user base, which include **strong support for offline-only operations** and **support for interviewer-led data collection**.
- Reliability: Because many of our users and user-organizations are non-technical, and because they are using ODK in situations where they cannot easily adapt to failure, it's important that ODK be reliable, and **reliable specifically at scale**. Reliability of existing features is more important to us than development of new features.
- Low barrier to entry: Because many of our users and user-organizations lack financial resources, it's important that the project remain affordable. This does not just mean that **ODK tools should be free or cheap to use**, although that's a key element. The project should also have a **shallow learning curve**, so that user-organizations don't have to invest in extensive training.
- Adaptability: Because we seek to serve a wide variety of users and user-organizations, it's important that **ODK work well with and within other tools**, and that it be **customisable** to users needs. To that end, we seek to provide **strong developer support**, with well-defined interfaces and extensive, readable documentation.
- Openness: ODK is an open source project, but our commitment to openness goes beyond the license. The openness of the ODK project allows users to **exercise control**

over their data, and to **avoid vendor lock in**, as well as more generally providing an active and friendly **space for engagement**.

What needs does ODK currently address?

- It allows fairly non-technical small organizations capture data digitally rather than via paper forms [ideal: strong a] [current: strong a, small d]
- It allows orgs to capture data cheaply [ideal: strong a] [current: medium a, small d]
- Core component that can work within other tools [ideal: strong a] [current: medium a, small d]
- Serves offline communities in particular [ideal: strong a] [current: strong a, no d]
- Serves interviewers in collecting data from respondents [ideal: small a] [current: strong a, no d]
- Provides support:
 - community support: advice to orgs without technical staff [ideal: strong a] [current: medium a, small d]
 - developer support: well-defined interfaces + documentation [ideal: strong a] [current: medium a, small d]
 - operational support: supporting deployments, etc [ideal: small a] [current: small a, small d]
- Lowers barriers to entry for orgs that are digitizing [ideal: strong a] [current: strong a, no d]
- Provides a space for engagement [ideal: small a] [current: strong a, no d]
- Provides options for data control [ideal: strong a] [current: medium a, small d]
- Code customization, avoiding vendor lock in [ideal: medium a] [current: small a, no d]
- Reliable at scale [ideal: v strong a] [current: small a, no d]
- Can be used across domains [ideal: strong a] [current: strong a, no d]