Open Gov & Open Data

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Gov2.0 Communities Doing it Right

Civic Commons

http://civiccommons.org

OpenStates Project

http://openstates.sunlightlabs.com

Code For America

http://codeforamerica.org

CIVX

The Org

CIVX, Inc. is a 501c3 not for profit organization.
As a public service we maintain **http://CIVX.US** --
a Free and Open platform built to aggregate raw data and
provide tools for accessing and visualizing information.

The Goal

To make the unavailable available
To make the available accessible
To make the accessible transparent

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Python <3 Open Data

"Python is a **programming language** that lets you work more **quickly** and integrate your systems more **effectively**. You can learn to use Python and see almost **immediate gains** in **productivity** and **lower maintenance costs.**

Python runs on **Windows**, **Linux/Unix**, **Mac OS X**, and has been ported to the **Java** and **.NET** virtual machines.

Python is **free** to use, _even for commercial products_, because of its **OSI-approved open source license**."

Source: http://python.org

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Our Stack

TurboGears2
 Built on best-of-breed open source technology
 Top-to-bottom comprehensive web application stack
 Support for multiple data-exchange formats

Moksha
 Modular
 Plugin-driven
 Highly-scalable
 Real-time
 Web platform

Community Built Python Modules
 BeautfiulSoup, html2csv, pyExcelerator, and many others

Moksha Hub

Cache

Widgets & Apps

External Resources (eg: Fedora Infrastructure)

Databases

Message Broker

Orbited

Moksha & TG2 WSGI Middleware Stack

WSGI Servers

A Series Of Tubes

MOKSHA

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http://moksha.fedorahosted.org

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Leveraging Gov2.0: Open Data Examples

Widgets

Information Visualizations

Dashboards

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Screen Scraping with BeautifulSoup

Using a Python HTML parser, our students aggregated contact info, committee membership, votes, meeting transcripts, and headshots for NY senators to create 'widgets' as components of a dashboard of information

http://www.nysenate.gov/senators

"Widgetized"

Design: Kate DuBuisson
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Information Visualization

HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW
This infovis graphic shows the process--as outlined on the NYS Senate website--of how a bill becomes a law

Design: Rebecca Berent
        pixelninja@civx.us

How a BILL becomes a LAW in the NYS Senate

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OVERVIEW

The job of the Senate is to work with the Assembly and the Governor to enact, amend or repeal statutes which make up the body of laws within which we live. This diagram shows the process of turning bills into laws in New York State.

Often, one person's idea on how to solve a problem has resulted in good legislation to help solve the problems of many people.

The Idea

IDEA

- Constituent(s) need
- Senator idea
- Individual idea
- State official proposes a change
- Organization's cause requires a law change

The formation of an idea is the starting point in the law-making process.

This is the first point at which citizens have a chance to have a say in the writing or rewriting of a law.

Bill Drafting

Once an idea for a new law has been settled on, it must be put into bill form before it can be considered by the Senate.

Drafting requires a specialized type of legal training and is usually done by:

A) Staff of the Legislative Bill Drafting Commission

B) An interest groups' own attorney

C) Lawyers working in state agencies

Introduction

The first step after drafting the bill is to introduce it to the Senate.

Bills can only be introduced by:

Legislators
OR
Standing Committees of the Senate and Assembly

EXCEPTION: The Executive Budget, which is submitted by the Governor.

Bill goes to the Introduction and Revision Office

1. Bill is examined and corrected
2. Bill is given a number
3. Bill is sent to appropriate standing committee
4. Bill is entered into the Senate computer
5. Bill is deemed to have had its first and second readings*
6. Bill is printed

*NOTE: "First reading", "second reading" and "third reading" are terms left over from the days when each bill was read three times in full public session before final action could be taken.

Bill Goes to the Governor

While legislature is in session, the governor has 10 days to sign or veto bills passed by both houses. Governor's failure to sign or veto a bill within the 10-day period means it automatically becomes a law. A Vetoed bill can still become a law if two-thirds of members of each house vote to override the Governor's veto.

Signed BILLS BECOME LAWS

VETOED BILLS RETURN TO HOUSE

The Calendar

The Calendar is the agenda for Senate sessions. Bills that are reported for consideration are put on the calendar and given a calendar number based on the order they were reported. Each bill has to be on the Senators' desks for three days before it can be voted on (unless the Governor authorizes and the Senate accepts a Message of Necessity.)

CALENDAR

When the bill comes up for consideration on the Order of the Third Reading, it is subject for: DEBATE, DISCUSSION, and/or EXPLANATION

Committee Action

All Bills must pass through the committee system before they can be considered.

Standing Committees, which are made up of specialists who study legislation, must evaluate bills before doing one of three things:

Committees may hold public hearings on bills to gather the widest range of opinions. This is the second point at which citizen contribution is important.

Public opinions can be sent directly to the committee chairman, or to your local Senator for relay to the committee.

- REPORT THE BILL FOR CONSIDERATION
- AMEND THE BILL
- REJECT THE BILL

Passing the Bill

After explanation, discussion or debate, a vote is taken. If a majority of the Senators approves, the bill is sent to the Assembly.

IN ASSEMBLY

- Bill is referred to a committee for discussion
  - IF BILL IS APPROVED
- Bill goes to full membership for vote
  - IF BILL IS AMENDED → Bill is returned to the Senate
  - IF BILL IS APPROVED WITHOUT AMENDMENT → Bill goes to the Governor

Floor Amendments

Once a bill has been introduced, reported out by a committee and is on the Senate calendar, it can still be amended.

- The sponsor of the bill can submit changes to the Bill Drafting Commission
- Any Senator may amend a given bill by offering changes to it on the Senate floor
- Any additional member can ask questions and discuss the bill and/or its amendments

BILL → LAW

Information Visualization

SENATE BUSINESS
This infovis graphic shows the process, as outlined on the NYS Senate website, of how a typical day runs on the Senate floor. The graphic also shows how seating works.

Design: Rebecca Berent
        pixelninja@civx.us

Senate Business

SENATE FLOOR PLAN

All senator and staff seats are designated by the corresponding colored half-circle on the diagram of the Senate Floor. The Majority party sits to the right of the center aisle and the Minority party sits to the left.

THE SENATORS

Lieutenant Governor / President of the Senate · Majority Leader / Temporary President of the Senate · DEPUTY Majority Leader · DEPUTY Minority Leader · Minority Leader · Chairman Finance Committee · RANKING Minority Member Finance Committee · Senator

THE SENATE FLOOR

THE SENATE STAFF

SECRETARY OF THE Senate · Journal Clerk · Deputy Clerk · Parliamentarian · Clergy Member · OFFICIAL Stenographer · SOUND Controller · Senate Page · Sergeant-at-Arms · Deputy · Reporter

SENATE BUSINESS

The flow-chart below shows a typical day on the Senate Floor.

THE DAY BEGINS
A Member of the Clergy begins the day by delivering an opening prayer.

BILL IS BROUGHT UP FOR VOTE
The Secretary of the Senate (or designated clerk) reads the title of the bill. Debate, if there is any, begins.

At the conclusion of the debate, the last section of the bill is read and the roll of Senators is called. Usually a *short roll call* is taken, but under some circumstances a *slow roll call* is requested.

SHORT ROLL CALL
All Senators are considered to be voting "yes", unless they raise their hands, which indicates a vote of "no".

Raised hand indicates NO

No action indicates YES

SLOW ROLL CALL
Requested by a Senator and at least 4 other Senators must support the request.

Names of all Senators are called for their votes. A member is allowed 2 minutes to explain his or her vote*.

This is true during both a short and slow roll call.

A black binder containing the bills that have been introduced is on each Senator's desk for quick reference when a bill comes up for a vote or debate.

No bill can become a law unless it has been on each senator's desk for 3 legislative days* before passage.

Day 1 · *Day 2* · *Day 3*

*Exception for immediate action: Bill is presented with a *Message of Necessity* from the Governor.*

ALTERNATIVE MEASURES
A Senator may ask that a bill be laid aside. This means that no action is taken at that time, but it will be considered again later.

The Temporary President or principal bill sponsor may request that a bill be "starred" (placed on an inactive list). No action can be taken on that bill until 1 day after it has been removed from the starred calendar.

PASSING THE BILL
A bill must be passed in identical form by both the Senate and the Assembly before it is sent to the Governor for his signature or veto.

To expedite the procedure, a bill passed by one house may be substituted for an identical bill in the other house.

BILL VETOED
If a bill is vetoed by the Governor, it may still become a law only if it re-passes each house by a two-thirds vote.

Election Results Dashboard

The Monroe County Board of Elections provides their own dashboard but...

Only available 24 hours before and after election

Uses closed/proprietary display formats

Doesn't display all meta-data fields

– blank ballots & over/under votes

...Thankfully

MCBE does provide a machine readable live feed of **ALL** data and meta-data

– results.xml

Unofficial data for Monroe County 2010 General Election

Reporting Precincts: 815/818

Last updated: 11/2/2010 10:40:40 PM

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Federal-Congressional Races

29th Congressional District

[Rep in Congress-29th Dist-2 Year Term](#)

[Rep in Congress-29th Dist-Unexpired Term](#)

25th Congressional District

[Rep in Congress-25th Dist](#)

26th Congressional District

[Rep in Congress-26th Dist](#)

28th Congressional District

[Rep in Congress-28th Dist](#)

Philip A Fedele

* Christopher J Lee

Write-in

	Rep in Congress-26th Dist	
DEMOCRATIC		26%
Total		66%
REPUBLICAN		50%
INDEPENDENCE		5%
CONSERVATIVE		11%
Total		0%

Blank Ballots*	5
Undervotes*	2990
Overvotes*	3

A blank ballot is a ballot which has been handed in with no votes recorded on it.
An undervote occurs when the number of choices selected by a voter in a contest is less than the maximum number allowed for that contest or when no selection is made for a single choice contest. (Wikipedia)
An overvote occurs when one votes for more than the maximum number of selections allowed in a contest. (Wikipedia)

Design: Nathaniel Case & David Silverman
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Take-Aways

Free/Opensource software is transparent down to the bit-level: transparent and collaborative communities and practices follow as a side-effect of Open Code and Open Data

Open Data is the bedrock of Visualization, Analysis, and Action

"Gotcha" politics are not productive; Building trust with Governments, Media, and other upstreams is the only way to engage meaningfully and long-term

Local experts are in **high** demand, have the **most** growth potential, and can have **immediate** impact

Thank Yous & Links

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RIT Lab for Technological Literacy and Center for Student Innovation

CSI:	http://innovation.rit.edu
FOSS@RIT:	http://foss.rit.edu
CIVX:	http://civx.us
Twitter:	@remy_d
Email:	remyd@civx.us
IRC.freenode.net:	#rit-innovation