

Case Study: Hack SMC

OPEN DATA PORTAL FACILITATES APP DEVELOPMENT



The Problem:

Lack of access to government data prevents resident involvement in government decisions, makes outreach more difficult, and neglects one of the most valuable resources available to San Mateo County, its residents.

Affected Audiences:

Those involved with San Mateo County, whether residents, employees, or both, reap major benefits from increased availability of government data in a comprehensive and organized format. Residents gain more transparency and a larger voice in County operations, and the County can more accurately and easily serve its constituents.



Using Open Data:

The Solution:

On June 6th, San Mateo County hosted Hack SMC, a civic hacking competition that awarded over \$10,000 of prize money. Developers were tasked with using data from the County's Open Data Portal to create apps that improve our community and increase residential involvement.

What datasets are being used and how?

Multiple datasets were utilized for a variety of apps— the data used ranged from geographic data that assisted location-oriented applications, to status reports from County schools that track student progress. With resident involvement, there are myriad ways data is used and applied. The winning app tackled the homeless problem by combining data from the homeless census with predictive analytics, while 12-year old competitor Anish Singhani used foster youth data to create a social network that connects foster youths with job opportunities.

What did data do?

Accessible government data in the SMC Open Data Portal provides interested residents the resources they need to create apps and websites that help their community. The data helps bridge that gap between County and resident.

What are benefits?

Increasing the quantity and quality of available government data on the SMC Open Data Portal helps utilize the full potential of residents to reduce County workload, while simultaneously increasing collaboration between residents and their government.

Feedback:

"Data is everywhere but is often locked away in siloed government departments. The convergence of policymaking, technology and data science allows government to share information it already has to better understand the root causes of known issues in real time, provides predictive modeling tools to anticipate future community needs, and make smarter decisions faster. The result is transformative."

- Michelle Littlefield, City of Redwood City