

Making open data more accessible for Staffordshire

The Client

Staffordshire University are a modern, vocationally inspired university, focused on the disciplines of creative arts, business and computing. The university puts student experience at the heart of what they do and are whole heartedly committed to becoming a key part of the local digital economy, driving economic growth in the Staffordshire region.

The Challenge

In order to facilitate the growth of the digital economy in the local area, Staffordshire University and its collaborators were looking for a way to make open data from local councils and their partners available in more accessible formats. This would allow digital businesses in the Staffordshire area to use and apply this valuable data, therefore encouraging the building of new products, which would in turn boost both the economy and improve the lives of its citizens.

The Solution

Tenshi proposed building an open data platform; a type of online store bringing together data from a variety of sources and making it easily visible and searchable. We reviewed open data solutions utilised by councils across both the UK and internationally and put together a brief for a platform which demonstrated best-practice.

From our research, we specified that the platform should be open to include data from sources outside the council, to maximise its potential use in stimulating the regional digital economy and providing a more inspiring environment for the university's students and alumni.

We recommended that the platform be designed to operate within the OASC (Open and Agile Smart Cities) and FIWARE initiatives, maximising Staffordshire's potential to become part of the global smart cities movement, whilst also making it as easy as possible for developers to interact with the data. We worked with an independent IT and digital services company, Hive IT, to build this store and guided the design, build and branding. We also worked with data owners and governance teams within the local council, to ensure they were comfortable with using the platform and saw the value in making their data available there.

Finally, we engaged our contacts from our work within the Staffordshire Connected Roadworks project, to source the initial data sets available on the launch of the platform and ensured they were correctly uploaded and tagged for use.



Outcomes

The data store, named the Data KILN, is now running in beta and has a number of data-sets available for exploration and use. This allows local businesses and entrepreneurs to utilise this data to build digital solutions for citizens. The university has also enabled local stakeholders to run open data challenges, creating improvements to services for citizens and encouraging an open data innovation community.

Brave, Inspiring, Resourceful

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