

Public Sector Information Online: Measuring the Social and Economic Costs and Benefits

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Governments and their administrative agencies continuously create, collect, manage, and store vast quantities of digital data and information, including a broad range of scientific and technical data, and increasingly disseminate much of it online. There is a growing recognition by both the public and private sectors of the importance of such public sector information (PSI) to the economy and society. Despite this recognition, there is surprisingly a poor understanding of how PSI is actually used, especially by individual users, its economic and social value and impact, and of the effects of different access and use policies. There is a concomitant lack of comprehensive or detailed empirical data about the users and effects of PSI disseminated on the internet, and of the different policy approaches to the dissemination of PSI.

This presentation will describe some of the issues in measuring the economic and social effects of PSI and summarize the methodologies used in such assessments.