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Opening the legislative and government control processes : Open Data and « En Séance »



DIRECTION DES SYSTÈMES D'INFORMATION



*Laurent Cottereau
Ludovic Pénet*

*Open Legislative Data in Paris II - Time has come for Law Tracking
Sciences Po, Amphithéâtre Caquot, 28 rue des Saints-Pères, 75007 Paris
<http://blog.lafabriquedelaloi.fr/conference/programme/>*



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A brief introduction to the Senate

- High Chamber of the French Parliament
- 348 Senators elected through indirect universal suffrage for 6 years
- 1200 civil servants
- 950 parliamentary aides

French : <http://www.senat.fr/>

English : <http://www.senat.fr/lng/en/index.html>



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Information Systems Department

- 35 civil servants, including :
 - 6 systems administrators
 - 1 database administrator
 - 1 information security officer
 - 18 software developers
- 2 development teams :
 - Administrative data processing
 - Document processing



Document processing team

- Develop software used for the law making and government control processes :
 - Publication of reports
 - Verbatim reports
 - Summary reports
 - Discussion of texts in commissions
 - Discussion of texts in plenary sessions
 - Voting system
 - Videos management
 - Questions to the government
 - ...

Document processing team

- Most softwares are developed and maintained in-house
- Most tools are Free or Open Source : specific processes call for custom software
- Structured data, except some reports

Document processing team

- Pioneered the administrative web :
 - 06/12/1995 : first web site
 - 10/06/1996 : verbatim report available online
 - 10/01/1997 : Law making reports online
 - 03/1997 : first forum by OPECST
 - 12/1999 : forum of M. Pierre Laffitte on a FLOSS law proposal
 - 01/2004 : accessible version
 - 10/2009 : Video-on-Demand
 - 11/2010 : mobile version
 - 12/2013 : tablets and smartphones « application »
- Web site nominated for e-democracy trophy in 2010
- Full log on <http://www.senat.fr/nouveautes.html> (French)



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Open Data Chronology

- <http://data.senat.fr>
- 2011/09 : first experiment during the elections
- 2012/10 : creation of an Open Data Workgroup in the administration :
 - Key principle : grant access in a structured form to all public data related to law making and government control
 - Exhaustive inventory of structured data available
 - Validation and documentation table by table, column by column
- 2013/06/26 : the Questeurs authorizes the launch of data.senat.fr



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« Il est décidé d'autoriser le lancement de la plateforme open data du Sénat, dans le courant du mois d'octobre 2013, afin de mettre à disposition dans des formats réutilisables des données relatives aux travaux législatifs et de contrôle publiées sur le site Internet du Sénat via des applications documentaires. »



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(Unofficial translation)

« It is decided to authorize the opening of the Open Data platform of the Senate, in the course of October 2013, in order to grant access to the law making and government control works published by documentary applications on the web site through reusable formats »



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http://data.senat.fr

The screenshot shows the homepage of the data.senat.fr website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the following links: A propos, Licence, Données, FAQ, Applications, Liens, Contact, and RSS. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- data.senat.fr**: A welcome message stating that the site is an Open Data platform for the Senate, offering four main categories of data: legislative works, amendments, reports, and questions. It includes a link to the license.
- Actualités**: A section titled "La base « Comptes rendus » est disponible" (The « Reports » database is available), explaining that the data is available in PostgreSQL 8.4 format. A "Lire la suite" link is provided.
- Actualités**: A section titled "La base « Ameli » est disponible" (The « Ameli » database is available), explaining that the data is available in PostgreSQL 8.4 format. A "Lire la suite" link is provided.
- Catégories**: A list of categories: Actualités, Amendements, Comptes rendus, Questions, and Travaux législatifs.
- Travaux législatifs**: A section titled "La base « Dossiers législatifs (Dosleg) »" (The « Legislative Files (Dosleg) » database), describing the content of the database and providing a link to "Travaux législatifs".
- Amendements**: A section titled "La base « Amendements (Ameli) »" (The « Amendments (Ameli) » database), describing the content and providing a link to "Amendements".
- Questions**: A section titled "La base « Questions »" (The « Questions » database), describing the content and providing a link to "Questions".
- Comptes rendus**: A section titled "La base « Comptes rendus »" (The « Reports » database), describing the content and providing a link to "Comptes rendus".



Open Data Chronology

- 2013/10/25 : « DOSLEG » : database of legislative files (15 Mb)
- 2013/11/26 : « Questions » database (200 Mb)
- 2013/12/23 : « AMELI » (AMEndements en Ligne), amendments database, including texts (43 Mb)
- 2014/02/05 : « Comptes rendus » : reports database (20 Mb)



Technical aspects

- Two kinds of exports :
 - Relational database dumps (PostgreSQL 8.4), for experts
 - CSV files, for everyone
- DB exports are performed in three steps :
 - Copy from Oracle to PostgreSQL using ora2pg
 - SQL filtering (delete, update, alter,...)
 - pg_dump



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Technical aspects

- Nightly updates
- Duration : 2 hours



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Open Data usages

- Legislative Cosponsorship Networks in the French Parliament
François Briatte, using AMELI database

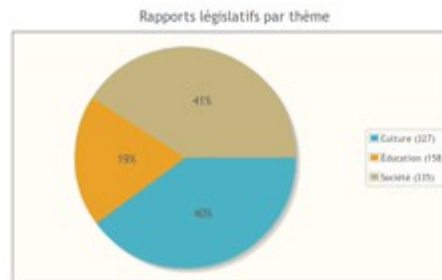




- Legislative files by topic

The Senate

Répartition des travaux par thème
Affaires étrangères et coopération
Agriculture et pêche
Aménagement du territoire
Anciens combattants
Budget
Collectivités territoriales
Culture
Défense
Economie et finances, fiscalité
Éducation
Énergie
Entreprises
Environnement
Famille
Fonction publique
Justice
Logement et urbanisme
Outre-mer
PME, commerce et artisanat
Police et sécurité
Pouvoirs publics et Constitution
Questions sociales et santé
Recherche, sciences et techniques
Sécurité sociale
Société
Sports
Traités et conventions
Transports
Travail
Union européenne





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LIBERTE, EGALITE, FRATERNITE

Following a plenary sitting

- All texts and amendments are available online
- Real time video is also available
- Easier access to amendments and texts during a sitting : « **En Séance** » (~In sitting)



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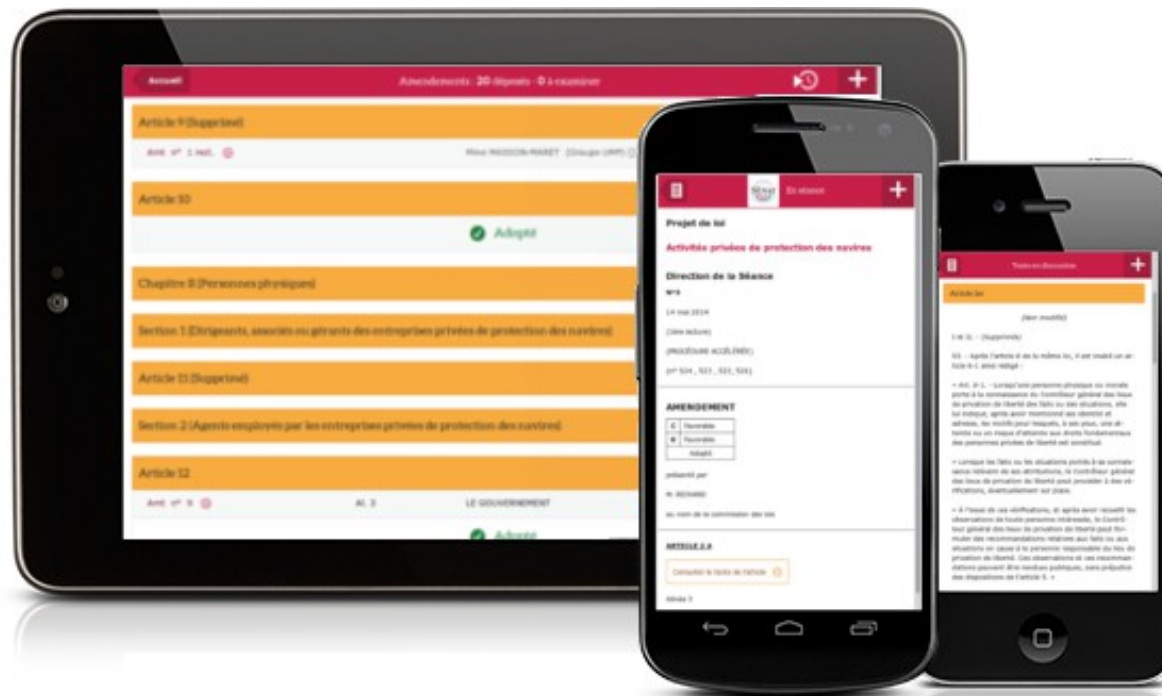
(screencasts)



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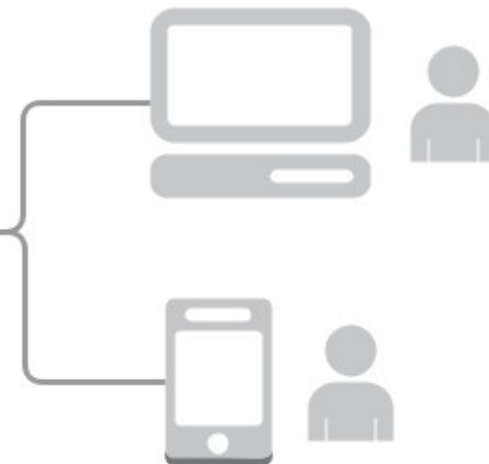
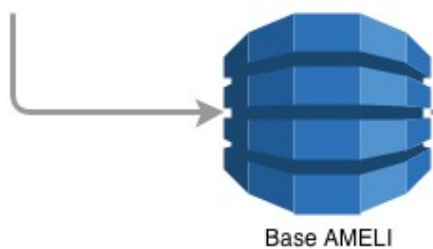


Objectives of « En Séance »





Technical aspects of « En Séance »





Next step : 2014 election

- Same CSV and XLS files as in 2011 will be available
- Candidacies and results will be available in real-time, in JSON
- 1 file with all circonscriptions, all candidates, all results (~100 kb)



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- Contact us at opendata-tech@senat.fr to have an early access to the stream
- Questions ?