

Impact Report 2019/2020

January 2021

Overview

During the first six months of ODM's financial year (September 2019 to March 2020), we held our usual programme of live events, including the monthly Open:Data:Nights, our Joy Diversion explorations around the city, Data for Communities workshops and Digging the Data, where this time we focussed on the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019.

Our last in-person event of 2020 was the Airport Data Hack Day, which saw attendees use real-time flight data to help understand the carbon emissions associated with air travel from our region, hosted at the start of March.

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, ODM was forced to move events online, but we have found this has created an opportunity to engage a broader group of people. Our participants are no longer bound by proximity to Greater Manchester or accessibility challenges concerning physical events, so moving our programme online has allowed us to reach a larger community and enabled more people to share their skills with us.

As such, regardless of what happens next with COVID-19, we will continue our online programme, especially with series like Pick 'N Mix, which have suited the format so well.

The year in numbers



What they told us...

Below is a selection of feedback we have received about some of the programmes and events run during the later part of the year.

Pick N Mix



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The wide range of topics covered made it interesting and the helpful presentations, and supply of resources, makes this a really fun and empowering thing.

The discussions at the end are also really fun and it's nice to have that time to chat or go into depth in a topic. It's given me a lot of ideas for projects and things to try out!

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Virtual Data Expedition



I enjoyed the combination of talks and exercises. It was nice to see the process of working with data all put together and presented in this way.

The one that really stays with me was the data pipeline session, and I think this is really relevant for my daily life. The discussions that came about throughout the expedition were both helpful and interesting.

It was nice working together and getting to know a group of people.



It was great to work with a team of people from different backgrounds and experience and produce something we were happy with

I feel that everyone came out of the experience with more knowledge, greater appreciation of data and new friends

It was fun and a great learning exercise and I have been encourage to investigate our data and other data even further

I would definitely recommend it to others

Open Data Surgeries



Like a lot of charities, we at Citizens Advice Manchester are looking to better understand our data and how we can use it to improve our service. I found Open Data Manchester surgeries a great help. It provides a great jumping off point as you start your data journey.

They helped with what useful data is out there that could help us, providing some insight into what to look for and what tools are best for getting started. Sam and Julian are both knowledgeable and passionate champions in how we can all be using data better.



- Stuart Pearson, Chief Digital Officer

Speaking to the community

Fiona's Data Journey: "ODM saved my 2020"

"I am a data analyst at WSP (large, civil-engineering company), with a Masters in palaeontology which is where I got my love of data, tech and all things open source/access. In my job I mainly work with SQL databases, in my spare time I do personal coding projects, watch TV and cycle. Before Lockdown 1 I was just getting into the meetup scene (I had just moved home from Germany and needed to meet new people) in Liverpool and Manchester, and headed online with the groups.

"I attended the Pick N Mix sessions as I love hearing about different tools and resources, you never know when this knowledge can be useful (and it's often in the most unexpected places).

"I am self-taught with a lot of my tech knowledge and skills, and this was a perfect opportunity to find out what else is out there and see some stuff in action rather than just reading forum posts! It's also a really great place to make connections and ask questions (which can be for interest or a specific purpose).

"I attended the Data Expedition as it offered a more comprehensive lesson in the data workflow and the processes involved. I've never had the opportunity before to see it all put together and explained like it was, especially as someone who isn't formally trained. Projects are the best way to learn things in my experience, and this offered the perfect opportunity to do a project with the guidance and contribution of others.

"Both the Pick N Mix and Data Expedition were run in a really engaging style of online event that just kept me coming back. **The community spirit that ODM brings together is really awesome and uplifting.**

"These events really helped keep me going through the strange year of 2020 both socially and educationally. I've definitely learned a lot from both and have used things I learned about in these session, including OpenStreetMap and qgis, APIs, various Python packages for all sorts of purposes, pipes in R (tidy verse) and Git/GitHub.

From the Data Expedition, I learned a lot about working in a team you are a) unfamiliar with and b) from completely different backgrounds. It also raised my awareness of what it's like to work with unfamiliar data! I know I learned a lot because after it finished, I thought of all the things I would do differently if I did it again.

Now I'm not gonna lie, I got a bit carried away here once I started writing but **honestly ODM saved my 2020.** I just want to say thank you for everything you and the team have done, and keep up the great work.

Magda's Data Journey: "I went out of my comfort zone"

I am a Java developer with an interest in large sets of data and how you can extract useful information from data.

I attended the Pick N Mix sessions because they were fun and informative, and I gained insight in technologies like ArcGis and Google Maps. I attended the Virtual Data Expedition because I wanted to develop my presentation skills and wanted to gain practice using Jupyter notebooks.

It was fun to meet people with the same interests as me. It was fun to work in a team in the Data Expedition and learn how to make a good story from data. I went out of my comfort zone using GeoPanda with geographical coordinates in analysing maps (a thing which I would never have tried by myself).

I think that I gained more confidence in finding and manipulating data, and insight into how to extract useful information and find meaningful correlations. Also, I learned how to avoid pitfalls and common mistakes like that correlations don't imply causation, and detection of biased data sets.

We live in an era of information clutter so the ability of mining and seeing patterns in data is a useful skill.

Ilga's Data Journey: training for a new career

Ilga came to Pick N Mix, went through the Virtual Data Expedition, then onto the Salford Data Analysis Fast Track Academy (with ODM as a referee). She's also getting involved with the Our Streets Chorlton project. It's been amazing to see her journey from an enthusiastic amateur to training for a career in data analysis.

As a person who is interested in data analysis, I found these [Pick N Mix] sessions very useful. First of all, the sessions covered tools and/or programming languages which I am not very familiar with, like Google Sheets or Text Mining with Python, so **there was always something new for me to learn**.

Secondly, the speakers. I can feel that **each speaker is passionate about what they are doing** and tries to make the session interactive. Some speakers even provided impressive workshop material, with step-by-step explanations, which is cool if you are interested to get hands on.

Another great thing was the format of the sessions. It was kept informative but at the same time very relaxed and friendly.