June 16, 2020

THINKDATA | WORKS

To: Executive Committee
City of Toronto
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON
M5H 2N2

Re: The value of releasing timely bike share ridership data as open data

Dear Committee,

I'm writing on behalf of ThinkData Works, a Canadian tech company founded in 2015 that uses open data as a core component of our business. We are proudly Toronto-based, and our 35 employees build products and services for some of the largest corporations in the world, including several Canadian Banks and two federal governments. While there are several excellent datasets offered through Toronto's open data portal, the bike share ridership data that is provided through the portal is insufficient, and the lag in delivery time makes it effectively useless for anything other than academic research. In order to maximize the potential of this high-value dataset, bike share ridership data must be released daily or weekly, at a granularity that ensures citizens and businesses can use relevant, timely information about how the city operates.

As Toronto recovers from the impact of COVID-19, BikeShare trip-level data is a critical signal that offers us an in-depth view into the patterns of movement across the city. Businesses can use this data to better understand what areas of the city are seeing increased or decreased activity, enabling them to spot trends, model outcomes based on road closures, and gain insight into a near real-time view of how traffic patterns in the city evolve over time. There is a significant economic impact to releasing this data in a timely manner that is neutralized when it is released up to 23 months after the date of the actual trip.

Granular ridership data of this kind is already released by CitiBike in New York City, and presents no privacy concerns, as the data is anonymized at the source. The Toronto Parking Authority should adopt the CitiBike NYC standards for open data delivery.

We acknowledge the significant strides the city of Toronto has made to evolve their open data policy and platform in the past several years, and will continue to work with the city's superlative open data team to create a standard of open data excellence for other cities to follow.

Sincerely,

Lewis Wynne-Jones
Director of Growth
ThinkData Works

ThinkData Works

An end-to-end data management platform that helps organizations find data, build products, and deliver solutions
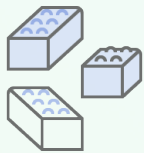
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The Data Ecosystem

Data has never been more available. Flowing from governments, businesses, and individuals, data is generated constantly and forward-thinking organizations know that using data effectively is their top priority.
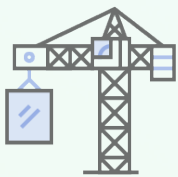
Unfortunately, data as it is generated is rarely ready for use. It is hard to find, non-standard, and difficult to process into usable products and applications. In order to get the most out of this new resource, data teams spend the majority of their time on engineering and preparation rather than analysis and insight.

ThinkData Works builds tools for every stage of the data lifecycle, resulting in less overhead, higher confidence, and faster deployment.

Data Provider

ThinkData Works' Data Marketplace provides instant access to data from governments, NGOs, and enterprises all over the world. An ETL pipeline trained on the hundreds of thousands of datasets on our platform guarantees normalized, standardized data.

Data Refinery

Flexible and intuitive data refining tools allow users to create, structure, and maintain ideal data products for project-perfect data. Connect to live data through APIs and direct integrations or use configurable exports for offline use.

Data Catalyst

The Namara data platform is a collaboration hub. Teams connect to a central source of truth for the data they need, which ensures data freshness across entire organizations, row-and-column-level access control, and transparency for admins and managers.