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The barriers and enablers to user contributed data within ‘grass roots’ innovation

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ABSTRACT: User contributed data is playing an increasing role in web-based services. Examples include Wikipedia, FixMyTransport, and Open Street Map, where the service is based around data or information provided by members of the public. Other examples within established offerings such as shopping or travel sites incorporate user reviews and recommendations. As web-based development has become easier, there is an opportunity for innovation with services that are based on contribution of data from individuals. These individuals may have specific expertise, or may be ‘lay’ members of the public. Although user contributed data presents an opportunity for genuine innovation, there are also a range of barriers which must be overcome in order for this to be successful. This article draws on a wide range of work undertaken by the research team in this area, and highlights the factors that encourage users to contribute data, and also the barriers that can stand in its way.