

OpenBudgets.eu: Fighting Corruption with Fiscal Transparency

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Spending & Budget visualisation Social Network features

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Abstract: This document documents the adaptation of the project's visualization creation interface to enable social sharing features.

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History

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1 Introduction

Public fiscal datasets concern government units that affect the lives of large numbers of citizens. One of the OpenBudgets.eu challenge is exploiting social media to increase connectivity. The project needs to enable stakeholders to provide feedback on budget and transaction data. This feedback should not only be fed within the OpenBudgets.eu portal, but could also be shared within social networks in order to share ideas. This would not only enable feedback to be passed back to the data providers, but also enable the interaction between the stakeholders and their peers. Additionally, stakeholders should also be enabled to share any visualisations they create.

Stakeholders will therefore be able to view and compare allocated budgets and transactions, and give feedback on each item. This feedback can then be shared through social media and also directly exploited by Governments and public administrations to achieve better budget management. The latter two stakeholders will thus benefit from receiving targeted suggestions, comparative benchmarks and scenarios.

2 Implementation

The main graphical interface of the OpenBudgets.eu application is the OpenSpending Viewer. To enable social interactions with the visualizations, the following options were considered:

1. Sharing to Facebook
2. Sharing to Twitter
3. Embedding the visualization to an arbitrary web page

These features allow the sharing of visualizations to social networks that are used by billions of users globally. Further sharing, commenting and even emotional interactions are possible. The users just need to click a button in the upper right part of the visualization to share it. The functionality is show in the following figure.

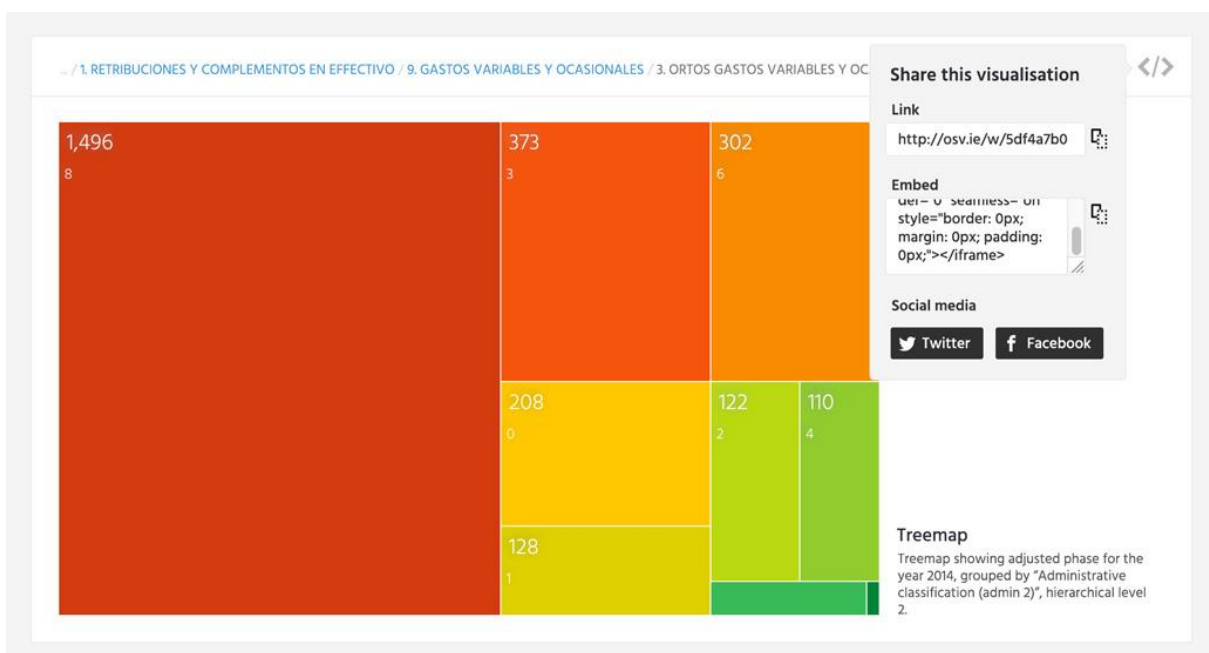


Figure 1: Visualization sharing to social networks

To enable the functionality, each visualization can be rendered chrome-less using a special page accessible from the "embed/{visualization}/" path, where {visualization} depends on the

type of the desired visualization. This way, any visualization made in the OpenSpending Viewer can be embedded in a web page, retaining its interactivity.

Additionally, social networks-specific metadata tags are appended in the embed page's head element, allowing the social networks to mine semantic information related to the rendered visualization. One of these meta tags also points to the URL of an image, required by social networks to display a preview of the shared resource. Moreover, tracking and analytics code can also be inserted in the same place, to enable the collection of information on the interaction and reach-out of the users to each visualization.