GRDF

How GRDF broke its data silos by opening its data enhancement platform?

With its 11 million clients and 198,000 kilometers (over 120,000 miles) of networks covering more than 9,500 cities in France, GRDF maintains an ever-growing quantity of data assets. The main natural gas distribution network operator in France quickly developed its data enhancement project. The company has thus equipped itself with a DataLab dedicated to predictive analysis in 2014. In the same year, GRDF launched a platform for internal data sharing. This same platform is now accessible to its staff and certain partners.

✔ The Challenge

Anxious to optimize the circulation of referential data within the company, GRDF Information Systems Division began in 2014 its data enhancement strategy.

What counts as data? Who holds them and in what way can they be accessed? How can their importance be evaluated? Multiple questions were raised and quickly showed the need to bring data into the spotlight in order to give them the most effective utility. Within the framework of its overall strategy, GRDF decided to set out in search of a solution that would allow it to showcase relevant information, and that could also respond to its dual objective:

- **Create bridges between each entity** of the organization (from the decisional center to regional divisions, from one region to another, from the Information Systems Division to business divisions);

- **Share a unified knowledge of data** so that staff can efficiently bring value to them within the context of their tasks.

"With an overarching culture surrounding data already a part of GRDF's DNA, the challenge was especially to develop the sharing of data, going beyond classic business silos. We needed an easy-to-use toolbox to give the possibility to anyone with important data to make them available to others." Nathalie Barthélémy, Data and Exchanges, Unit Manager, Information Systems Division, GRDF.

⊘ The OpenDataSoft Solution

Convinced by the tool's intuitive and user-friendly interface, GRDF turned to OpenDataSoft to deploy its internal platform for sharing data. *"As it is ready-to-use, the solution is easy-to-use for the largest number of people, both internally and externally,"* explains Julien Quainon, Open Data Project Manager at GRDF. *"Having already accompanied some of the largest actors in the energy sector, it only seemed logical to adopt the OpenDataSoft solution,"* he added.

A Central Hub

Capable of connecting to multiple information collection systems and professional applications, the platform functions for GRDF as a collaborative space to share data. It has also allowed the company to display the data thanks to the dynamic visualization tools and in particular thanks to the representation of geographic information, which was well received by users.

A Platform Implemented in a Flash

The short amount of time required to master the OpenDataSoft functionalities, whether basic (publishing a dataset, creating pages), or more complex (attributing access rights, masking columns) allowed administrators and users to concentrate on content and data quality, rather than the technique.

"We were looking for a complete yet flexible solution that responds to all of our needs. The native functionalities offered by the platform allowed for a simple, secure, and rapid implementation of our Open Data project."
Jean-Charles Jorandon, Manager of Digital Innovation Projects, GRDF.
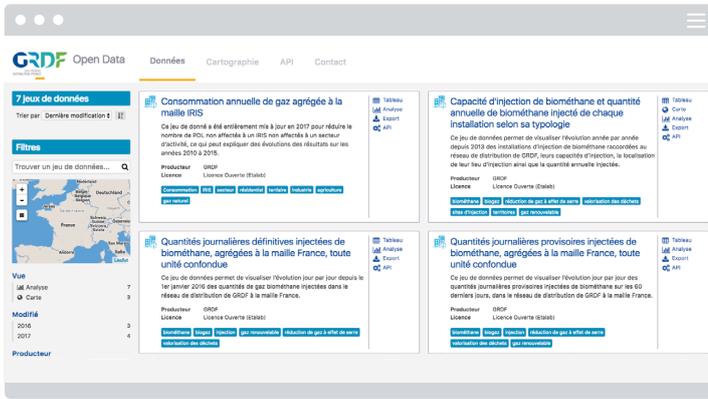
A Three-Pronged Approach

The OpenDataSoft solution allows administrators to attribute rights to users in order to have precise control over who can publish, modify, or explore certain datasets (or even certain segments of a dataset). The existence of these functionalities gave GRDF the possibility to think of its data diffusion strategy in different stages.

Acclimation Phase: Sharing Referential Data

The platform was first opened to the group's staff at the national and regional levels. Users from all domains of GRDF can publish here Organizational information, cartographic and asset data (piping, regulators, meters, etc.).

Partial Opening to Certain Partners Within the Context of Their Projects

Restricted access to the portal was then applied for certain partners as for regional authorities. *"These authorities are very sensitive to the question of data and GRDF intends to construct a durable relationship with them based on quality information,"* explains Julian Quainon, Open Data Project Manager.

The growing adhesion of staff and partners to this Open Data project comforted GRDF in its choice to open to the public certain datasets. Launched in December, 2016, the portal opendata.grdf.fr allows all users and citizens to access data of general interest.

About 10 datasets covering topics such as gas consumption are currently available on GRDF' Open Data Portal.

✔ What are the Benefits?

More Useful Data is Now in Circulation

Accessible without advanced technical skills, the platform is used by employees with diverse profiles, ranging from data architects to the operational staff in regional entities. Anyone holding data can now make them visible and useable through this shared space.

More Useful and Better Identified Data

Putting in place a shared tool for all skill levels throughout the company also allowed staff to immerse itself with the same vision of what data are collected by GRDF, and what they have to offer.

2 Years After the Start of the Project

200+ Datasets are opened internally and accessible to staff

40+ Datasets in restricted access

(visible only to certain GRDF partners: local municipalities, energy providers, etc.)

10+ Datasets available to the public in Open Data

"The platform truly allowed us to support our project reflection and awareness of the company's data. It allowed us to bring together and facilitate the exchanges between different teams at the national and regional levels, and Information Systems Divisions around a common applied reference."
Nathalie Barthélémy, Data and Exchanges Unit Manager, Information Systems Division, GRDF.

Are you ready to bring value to your Data?

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