Chapter 8
Digitalizing Police Requirements: Opening up Justice through Collaborative Initiatives

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ABSTRACT
In the last one or two years, the growing demand for an open state has sped up the adoption of ICT aimed at improving access to justice, making the judiciary more transparent, increasing cooperation between legal authorities, and strengthening the justice system itself. Of particular importance are interoperability initiatives since they guarantee collaboration as well as the harmonic and cohesive functioning of different existing systems, processes, and applications that, in the justice field, are many as a result of the big variety of actors that are involved: judicial institutions but, also, different public administrations, such as those responsible of police forces, and law professionals. The chapter describes and analyzes GRP (Gestió de Requeriments Policials), a project that allows for the exchange of information between the Department of Justice and the Department of the Interior in the framework of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia (Spain).

INTRODUCTION
On January 2009, President Obama signed the Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government. The memorandum declares the new administration’s commitment to creating an unprecedented level of openness in government and establishing a system linking three principles: transparency, public participation, and collaboration.

Although there is agreement on the popularization of the term by the Obama Administration’s Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government, the concept is not new. Despite the first written reference dates back to 1957, when Parks (1957) published “The open government principle: applying the right to know under the Constitution”, its use goes back to the 70s, when the British government

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-0717-8.ch008
promoted several initiatives aimed at achieving more information freedom and more access to govern-
ment’s activity and, therefore, at reducing opacity (Chapman & Hunt, 2006). Along time, and as a 
consequence of contributions from different fields, this first approach has been refined, giving rise to 
a definition related to enhancing transparency, collaboration, and participation by means of open data 
and open action. Gascó (2014) summarizes and operationalizes these dimensions stating that an open 
government is (see Table 1):

- A transparent government, that is, a government that is accountable and that delivers information 
to citizens about its strategies, plans, and performance.
- A collaborative government, that is, a government that involves citizens and other external and 
internal actors in the design, delivery and evaluation of public services.
- A participative government, that is, a government that promotes citizen engagement in political 
processes and, particularly, in the design of public policies.
- A government that prioritizes the use of two key tools: open data (that is, data that are available 
in standardized and structured formats, that are machine-readable, and that are guaranteed to be 
freely available over time) and open action (that is, the use of web 2.0 tools and, particularly, of 
social media and blogging).

During the last few years, public administrations around the world have embarked on open govern-
ment initiatives and have worked to redefine their relationship with citizens and with each other. Some of 
them have even joined efforts and have taken part in networks such as the Open Government Partnership, 
which was launched in 2011 to provide an international platform for domestic reformers committed to 
making their governments more open, accountable, and responsive to citizens.

However, a review of the action plans undertaken in the framework of the Open Government Part-
nership shows that most of the initiatives have been implemented by governments (executive power), 
on one hand, and have focused on transparency and, to a lesser degree, on participation, on the other.

For one thing, several public institutions and agencies have designed and implemented important 
open government strategies and plans aimed at increasing transparency and citizen participation. This 
has not been the case in the justice field, despite the implementation of several initiatives world-wide, 
as Jiménez (2014) shows. However, the explicit recognition of the administration of justice both as a key 
component of the State of Law (it is one of the three powers) and as a public service has made evident

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Gascó, 2014.