

Been there – done that! The amazing things that transparency advocates can learn from architects

Dieter Zinnbauer received his PhD from DESTIN in 2003, and now works on new issues for Transparency International and blogs at ambient-accountability.org.



2015: Transparency is widely recognised as a cornerstone of good, accountable government and the practice of transparency today is alive and strong: we are deploying the **cutting-edge of technology**, we have a formidable infrastructure for policy advocacy, we are operating with ever more fine-grained strategies of engaging people and our **tools for learning and measuring impact** are also gradually getting better.

So where next for transparency and open governance?

How about looking a bit outside the box and travelling back to the roots of transparency as a physical, material quality of an object? Sounds odd and hopelessly outdated, but at least for me this turned out to evolve into an amazing and eye-opening exploratory journey written up **in a new working paper**.

The four-point speed read:

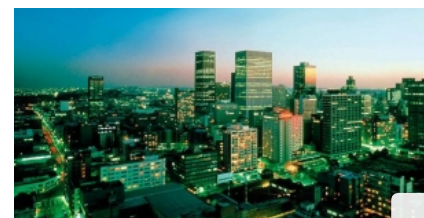
1. there is a lot that we can learn from architects and how they have been approaching and thinking about transparency
2. there is a surprisingly strong and contemporary physical dimension to institutional transparency that is somehow largely overlooked by the transparency community
3. re-visiting and revitalising the conversation about physical transparency could provide a wealth of inspiration for the road ahead for the institutional transparency crowd and a push for such a conversation is coming from some very unexpected corners
4. As inspiration I present three first ideas of where such experimentation around physical transparency could take us to. How, for example about feed(feed-back)back?

So journeying back to the roots of transparency could actually be a very promising pathway into the future.

(Zinnbauer, Dieter, 'Architecting Transparency Back to the Roots – and Forward to the Future?' Working paper, June 2015. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2616655> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2616655>)

You can see Dr Zinnbauer's early working papers at the **Department website**.

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