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**Shorenstein Center Paper by former U.S. CIO Vivek Kundra argues  
for democratization of government data**

**CAMBRIDGE, MA.** — The information economy is bringing a shift in power from large institutions to individuals, argues **Vivek Kundra** in a new paper, [\*Digital Fuel of the 21st Century: Innovation through Open Data and the Network Effect\*](#). The paper is based on interviews and research that Kundra conducted while serving as a Fellow at the [Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy](#) at Harvard Kennedy School.

"In today's world, open data leveraged by networks is the fuel that powers important decisions at each level of society—from government, to business, to community, to households—but it is also a product of our every activity at every level of our existence," Kundra explains. He outlines four ways of channeling this open data through networks:

1. Fight government corruption, improve accountability and enhance government services
2. Change the default setting of government to open, transparent and participatory
3. Create new models of journalism to separate signal from noise to provide meaningful insights
4. Launch multi-billion dollar businesses based on public sector data

"The biggest threat to the open data movement is the desire for governments to operate in a closed, secretive and opaque manner and to create a mirage of openness by releasing low value datasets," Kundra warns.

**Vivek Kundra** served as a joint Fellow at the Shorenstein Center and at Harvard's Berkman Center on the Internet and Society in the Fall of 2011. Kundra was appointed as the first United States Chief Information Officer by President Obama. Prior to joining the Obama administration, Kundra served in Mayor Fenty's cabinet as the CTO for the District of Columbia and Governor Kaine's cabinet as Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Technology for the Commonwealth of Virginia. He has also served in leadership roles in the private sector. The World Economic Forum selected Kundra as a 2011 Young Global Leader. He was named 2011 Government Executive of the year by TechAmerica; the 2009 Chief of the Year by InformationWeek; and 2008 IT Executive of the Year for his pioneering work to drive transparency, engage citizens and lower the cost of government operations. Currently, Kundra is executive vice president of emerging markets for Salesforce.com.

Read the full paper on the Shorenstein Center's website:

[http://www.hks.harvard.edu/presspol/publications/papers/discussion\\_papers/d70\\_kundra.html](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/presspol/publications/papers/discussion_papers/d70_kundra.html)