

# Volunteer Developers Work Together to Create Apps for Transparency

By **Guest Contributor** - July 15, 2014



*Natalie Iwasa*

**BY NATALIE IWASA** – Have you ever tried to figure out who’s monetarily supporting a particular candidate or how your political contributions are being spent?

Would you like to know *all* of the candidates in a particular race – not just the ones the media chooses to cover?

Wouldn’t complete candidate profiles be nice?

While this is all public information that is available in various places such as the [Campaign Spending Commission’s website](#) or at the [Office of Elections](#), it can be a challenge analyzing the data or seeing the big picture.

Well not anymore.

Volunteers from various organizations, including Burt Lum of Hawaii Open Data Hawaii and Carmile Lim and Corie Tanida from Common Cause Hawaii, have collaborated with the Campaign Spending Commission through its Executive Director, Kristin Izumi-Nitao, to create applications for computers and mobile devices that will help you analyze and



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explore campaign spending and other election-related data. Volunteer developers from the community have developed apps that help the Commission to improve their data transparency and access for the public.

Not only is it easy to access the information, clever apps make the data interesting to look at. For example, one app presents [campaign spending data](#) in a “bubble” format with expenditures represented by different colors – the bigger the bubble, the higher the expenditure. And it’s easily rearranged by office, expenditure, candidate, party or amount.

Anomalies such as over \$280,000 spent on “other” stick out like a sore thumb, but it’s easy to see with one click that the amount is mainly due to donation refunds.

Would you like to compare how much candidates in a particular district received? Take a look at contribution and fundraiser data on a [timeline](#) by clicking on a map, and click again to get more specific details.

Other apps, such as one that allows campaign contributions to be aggregated by a single donor (including aliases) or group of donors, are in Beta form.

These apps make it very easy for even a novice to get good information about our candidates for office. In addition, all apps on the [Civic Celerator](#) website are free. Kudos to the volunteers who worked so hard to put them together.

*Natalie Iwasa is a Hawaii Kai resident, a CPA and a candidate for Honolulu City Council*

## Comments

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