THE AHJ REGISTRY A GIFT CULTURE IN GOVERNANCE

Taos Jacques Transue (Thomas C. Henderson)
School of Computing

There are multiple examples of cultures where people have incentives other than money to contribute to the community. A gift culture is one where people contribute in exchange for social status, reputation, and recognition. The incentives of a gift culture to contribute to the community are intangible and not directly measurable with money, but they are still able to power communities to accomplish large feats. Linux and many of the open-source software projects on platforms such as GitHub have developed out of gift cultures; indeed, Linux is competitive with Microsoft Windows. Gift culture can organize communities to produce great software, but is it able to organize communities to change government processes in the United States? My capstone team project, the AHJ Registry, is establishing a gift culture within the solar industry to change how solar installers get permits. It targets two issues with the solar permitting process: finding what local government agency has authority to issue a permit for a solar installation address, and what the requirements are in the agency's jurisdiction to have an installation approved for a permit. To solve these, the AHJ Registry establishes a gift culture by intentionally incentivizing solar installers, officials who issue permits, and others in the solar industry to contribute permit requirement data with opportunities to be recognized by the AHJ Registry's community.