ICT for Civic Data — Crash Course 2026

Storytelling and Peer Review

Self-Paced Review — Section G

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Why This Matters

> Communicate clearly to a funder

The shift from tools to storytelling. You have built maps, cleaned data, created charts, assembled a data portal. Now: **what does it all mean for the funder?**

Project competence by being **clear and grounded**. The funder does not evaluate your technical skills directly; they evaluate your ability to communicate what you found and why it matters.

Everything built in the previous sections is raw material. This section is about shaping it into a story that a proposal reviewer can follow in five minutes.

Before You Start

> From tools to storytelling

Don't be drunk on your work.

It is natural to be proud of what you built. You cleaned 10,000 rows. You combined three datasets. Your map has five layers. Your dashboard has four charts.

The funder does not care:

- Not about your data volume
- Not about how many hours you spent cleaning
- Not about the technical complexity of your pipeline
- Not about your beautiful website

They care that you are telling a **clear, substantive story**, one that connects your data to their problem. The data work is evidence, not the point. The story is the point.

> Five steps narrow from case study to story

Each step narrows from broad to specific:

1. **Case study** — a concrete situation: Indonesia, floods, remote communities, health facilities
2. **Angle** — the insight: prevention + staff safety + emergency response
3. **Proposal** — the plan: a facility risk dashboard for field staff
4. **Demonstrate** — the evidence: a working map showing 23% of facilities in flood zones
5. **Tell the story** — the narrative: "Here is a problem CLI faces. Here is what the data shows. Here is what we propose to do about it."

The story is not a fifth step after the work. It is the **frame** that holds everything together. Without it, you have artifacts. With it, you have an argument.

Walkthrough

> Five questions structure peer feedback

Five questions to ask about every presentation:

1. Do the visuals communicate the point quickly? Can a reviewer understand each chart in under 10 seconds without reading the surrounding text?

2. Is the angle clear? Can the reviewer state in one sentence what this proposal is about?

3. Is the case study convincing? Does the data actually support the argument, or is the evidence thin?

4. Are visuals integrated into the narrative, not explained separately? The map should appear where the story needs it, not in an "Appendix: Data Visualisations" section. If you need a paragraph to explain what a chart shows, the chart is not working.

5. What is missing? What would make this more convincing? What question does the proposal leave unanswered?

> Exercise: present and review

Groups of 3–4. Each person presents (5 min) then receives feedback (5 min).

1. Walk through your proposal narrative, showing your data portal, map, and charts as supporting evidence
2. The group uses the five questions to give structured feedback

Rules:

- The presenter **does not explain the data work** — the story should speak for itself
- Reviewers focus on **clarity and persuasiveness**, not technical quality
- Take notes. The feedback shapes your final submission
- Be specific: "I didn't understand the red markers" is useful; "looks good" is not

Behind the Approach

> Visuals support the argument – they are NOT the argument

A common mistake is turning a presentation into an **explanation of your data work**:

- "First we cleaned the data using OpenRefine..."
- "This bar chart shows the result of our IFS formula..."

The funder does not need to know your tools. They need to know your **findings and your plan**.

Another common mistake: becoming a **class on concepts the funder already knows**:

- "As you know, floods are a major disaster type..."
- "Data-driven approaches can improve decision-making..."

The goal: project competence by being **clear and grounded**, not by teaching or narrating your process.

FAQ

> How do I frame data work with indigenous communities?

A student asked about involving communities in data collection. This connects to **Section B, slide 37**: the full discussion on empowerment vs instruction.

The key principle: the goal is not teaching communities new things. It is helping them **demonstrate that what they already know and do is powerful**.

Communities in climate-vulnerable regions already know:

- Which areas flood and when
- Which paths are impassable in the rainy season
- Where people go when they evacuate

Data tools **surface and validate** this existing knowledge, making it visible to decision-makers who allocate resources. The proposal should frame data as an amplifier of community expertise, not a replacement for it.