New York City Comptroller
John C. Liu

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LIU OPEN-SOURCES CHECKBOOK NYC

$1 Million in Commitments from Oracle, CGI, & REI Systems Will Facilitate Rapid Adoption of NYC's Groundbreaking Financial Transparency Website

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Visit Checkbook NYC
View source code at GitHub

NEW YORK, N.Y. – City Comptroller John C. Liu today published the source code for the Checkbook NYC financial transparency website, and announced several partnerships that will enable other governments to rapidly leverage New York City's investment in order to create similar websites of their own.

Checkbook NYC empowers the public to keep an eye on more than $70 billion in annual government spending with detailed, up-to-date information about New York City's revenues, expenditures, contracts, payroll, and budget. In January, the U.S. Public Interest Research Group named it the best website of its kind.

"In an era of scarce resources, open source software represents a major cost savings opportunity for taxpayers because it allows government to mobilize the collective talents of developers everywhere," said **Comptroller Liu**. "Sharing the Checkbook NYC code with other governments is not a selfless act; on the contrary, it's a win-win strategy that will enhance the quality of our software at no additional cost to taxpayers."

The code, which is available for use and modification under the AGPL 3.0 license, can be accessed at GitHub (https://github.com/NYCComptroller/Checkbook), an online community where open source code is stored and shared. Comptroller Liu encouraged programmers and governments that adopt the system to contribute improvements and features that can be incorporated into future versions of the source code.

Comptroller Liu made the announcement at the 10th annual Personal Democracy Forum, which explores the evolving relationship between technology and democracy. He thanked two technology giants, Oracle (NASDAQ: ORCL) and CGI (NYSE: GIB), for agreeing to develop "adapters," in the form of automated data feeds, between their financial management systems

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and Checkbook NYC. These feeds will enable other state and local governments that use Oracle and CGI solutions to easily share their financial data with the public.

"Oracle is proud to support the City of New York in providing transparency into city spending via the Checkbook NYC application," said **Peter Doolan, Group Vice President & Chief Technologist of Oracle Public Sector**. "We believe that open and transparent insight into government spending strengthens the democratic process and provides a framework for fiscal responsibility and accountability."

"CGI is proud of its partnership with the City of New York, and has long been a believer in the benefit of using IT to improve the efficiency, openness, and accessibility of government information to the public," said **Michael Keating, CGI Senior Vice President and New York Client Executive**. "We support the vision of Checkbook NYC and look forward to helping interested governments expand its adoption."

Comptroller Liu also commended REI Systems, the technology firm that collaborated with the City on the development and open-sourcing of Checkbook NYC, for volunteering to provide Oracle and CGI with the technical expertise and tools to test their new "adapters" and to host "sandbox" development sites for a select number of their state and city financial management system clients.

"We couldn't be more proud of our association with the Office of the Comptroller of the City of New York and the launch of Checkbook NYC," said **Scott Fletcher, REI Systems Chief Operating Officer**. "Checkbook NYC has set a new bar for financial transparency, and the City of New York is taking it to an entirely new level by leveraging this investment for the benefit of other state and local governments across the U.S. What a great opportunity to demonstrate the power of creative and innovative public-private partnerships to improve government operations and transparency."

Collectively, Oracle, CGI, and REI Systems are estimated to have committed to investing more than $1 million of resources in order to make Checkbook NYC rapidly adaptable by other governments.

The Comptroller credited Deputy Comptroller Ari Hoffnung and Assistant Comptroller Michael Bott for their leadership roles on this open-source project and for taking steps to ensure that Checkbook NYC improves over time.

"Governments serious about reducing costs and inefficiencies must make collaboration a top priority," said **Deputy Comptroller Ari Hoffnung**. "We also need to work more closely with our technology vendors to ensure that the tools we purchase are developed in a way that enables government to easily share data with the public and become more financially transparent."

The Comptroller also thanked several City agencies for their assistance on this project, including the Mayor's Office of Contract Services, the New York City Council, the City's Financial Information Services Agency, and the Office of Management and Budget.

"There's endless potential for excellence in government when it leverages the knowledge of the people and communities it serves," said **New York City Chief Information and Innovation Officer Rahul N. Merchant**. "Publishing the source code for Checkbook NYC is an important contribution to the Bloomberg Administration's ongoing open government efforts."

A "Checkbook NYC Hackathon," designed to bring together civic activists, software developers, and entrepreneurs, is being planned for the fall. Discussions are also under way with other governments to form a consortium that would collaboratively manage the Checkbook NYC source code and share costs associated with future enhancements.

"I applaud the City Comptroller's office for promoting transparency through Checkbook NYC and making important data available to the public," said **New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli**. "In 2008, our Open Book New York site gave the public access to state spending in real time. Since then we've had more than 2.7 million visits with people searching for contracts, local-government, and state-agency spending, and plan to add more spending data to the site. We invite others to join with us and the City Comptroller to share public data more easily and quickly."

"With Checkbook NYC, the New York City Comptroller is proving unequivocally that technology can indeed make government more efficient, transparent, and accountable," said **Andrew Rasiej, founder of Personal Democracy Forum and Chairman of NY Tech Meetup**. "The open way Checkbook NYC has been strategically designed and deployed further confirms that New York City is ready to move from the era of simple 20th-century E-Government to the reality and benefits of 21st-century We-Government."

"This is a smart move that will benefit other cities and states seeking to adapt the unrivaled features of Checkbook NYC," said **Phineas Baxandall**, a **Senior Analyst at U.S. PIRG** and national expert on government transparency. "It's doubly smart because New York City will reap rewards every time other places build improvements and new functions for this platform. It's a win-win."

"Opening up the Checkbook NYC source code to the public is a fantastic step toward increasing transparency in government spending," said **Council Member Gale A. Brewer, an author of the City's groundbreaking Open Data law**. "I have been an advocate of Checkbook NYC and government transparency for many years. By opening this code to programmers, we will enable other municipalities to build their own open sites. Checkbook NYC lets citizens track spending and makes government work smarter here and across the country."

"CheckbookNYC.com is an outstanding example of local government adoption of the open source software model, and with this project NYC has truly stepped up and into the open IT ecosystem," said **Deborah Bryant, Open Source for America co-chair and Director, Open Source Initiative**. "NYCs highly evolved approach also increases the benefit of collaboration beyond software code – such as sharing related investments like training, knowledge base, and business rules – exponentially increasing its value to the City and anyone else joining the project."

"Comptroller Liu continues to enhance transparency of the City's finances with the latest advancement of Checkbook NYC, the online tool that provides virtual real-time updates of the City's spending from payroll to contracts," said **Dick Dadey, Executive Director of Citizens Union**. "By making publicly available the open source code for Checkbook NYC, Comptroller Liu is ensuring that other cities and states across the country can make known their expenditures in an accessible format to the public. This will help establish New York City as a leader in financial transparency."

"Congratulations to the team who has delivered CheckbookNYC.com," said **Jennifer Foutty, Executive Director, Kuali Foundation**. "It is a significant milestone that demonstrates how local government is finding ways to collaborate and use open source technology to provide effective services and drive down costs. The Kuali Foundation, which produces open source software for higher education through leveraged investment by member institutions, is pleased to see like-minded efforts in local government."

"Checkbook NYC is a great example of how open data can dramatically improve visibility for citizens and taxpayers into the operations of their government," said **Mark Headd, Chief Data Officer for the City of Philadelphia**. "The move to open source the code for this application is a huge victory for government transparency and a boon for other cities that are working to open up spending and budget data."

"Checkbook NYC has already set a new gold standard for financial data transparency by a major city," said **Andrew Hoppin, 2010 New York State Public Sector Chief Information Officer of the Year and CEO, New Amsterdam Ideas**. "Even more laudable is the Comptroller's ambitious plan to release Checkbook NYC as an open-source software project that other cities can benefit from and contribute back to."

"We're impressed," said **John Kaehny, Co-Chair of the NYC Transparency Working Group and Executive Director of Reinvent Albany**. "Comptroller Liu's Checkbook NYC team has built a powerful transparency tool for New York City and created an open source process and partnerships that ensure it will keep evolving and improving. This is smart, effective 21st century government, and a new model for New York City technology tools."

"By making the code for Checkbook NYC open source, New York City Comptroller John Liu is providing cities and towns across the country with a free tool to promote budget transparency," said **Ronnie Lowenstein, director of the New York City Independent Budget Office**.

"Governments around the globe will benefit enormously from this contribution to the open data ecosystem," said **Kevin Merritt, Socrata's Founder and CEO**. "Socrata will support the Checkbook NYC app by offering it as a turnkey cloud service, and enhancing it with open APIs for developers, and online data analysis and visualization tools for citizens."

"Opening data and granting better access to public information will only get easier as governments and communities learn from each other's successes and challenges," said **Ellen Miller, Executive Director and Co-Founder of the Sunlight Foundation**. "By making

Checkbook NYC open source, New York City is providing a valuable resource to other towns, cities, and states looking to attain greater financial transparency."

"We applaud New York City and Oracle for the work they are doing to promote financial transparency," said **Montgomery County, Maryland, Controller Lenny R. Moore**. "Montgomery County is a leader in open data and is always working to make government spending more accessible and easier to understand for our taxpayers. We are intrigued by the possibility of deploying an open Checkbook."

"Cities need to share their resources, and innovations in any city should benefit every city," said **Abhi Nemani, Chief of Staff, Code for America**. "Checkbook NYC is a flagship example of the emerging ecosystem of interoperable, useful, and reusable civic tools. This is the kind of project Code for America hopes to support in city after city."

"New York has provided a very easy-to-use transparency portal to gain access to budget, payroll and departmental expenditures, to the point that not only will the citizens of New York benefit, but internal departments will benefit by having easy access to their own information for better management and accountability," said **Steve Reneker, General Manager and Chief Technology Officer, City of Los Angeles Information Technology Agency**. "The City of Los Angeles will be looking into leveraging this open source solution to provide similar benefits."

"Checkbook NYC provides New Yorkers with both the data on how City funds are spent and the tools to take a close look," said **Gene Russianoff, Senior Attorney for the New York Public Interest Research Group**. "And now, cities across the nation will be able to do the same, thanks to the New York City Comptroller."

"Checkbook NYC is by far the most sophisticated city-budget transparency app to date," said **Adam Stiles, co-creator of Open Budget Oakland**. "By making Checkbook available to cities nationwide, NYC is enabling a common framework to understand city spending that could one day allow, for example, apples-to-apples comparisons of spending across cities."

Background

Press release: Launch of Checkbook NYC 2.0 (January 23, 2013)
http://www.comptroller.nyc.gov/press/2013_releases/pr13-01-014.shtm

Video: Launch of Checkbook NYC 2.0 (January 23, 2013)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sb98yCJPFSw

About Oracle:
With more than 390,000 customers—including 100 of the Fortune 100—and with deployments across a wide variety of industries in more than 145 countries around the globe, Oracle offers an optimized and fully integrated stack of business hardware and software systems.

About CGI:
Founded in 1976, CGI Group Inc. is the fifth largest independent information technology and business process services firm in the world. Approximately 69,000 professionals serve thousands of global clients from offices and delivery centers across the Americas, Europe and Asia Pacific, leveraging a comprehensive portfolio of services including high-end business and IT consulting, systems integration, application development and maintenance, infrastructure management as well as a wide range of proprietary solutions. As a full-service systems integrator and managed services provider, CGI has the industry know-how, tools and technologies to address business challenges across the public sector spectrum. CGI provides state and local governments with creative IT solutions that drive efficiencies, effectiveness and cost containment—all while achieving short term needs and maintaining governments' long-term vision. With annualized revenue in excess of C$10 billion and an order backlog exceeding C$18 billion, CGI shares are listed on the TSX (GIB.A) and the NYSE (GIB). Website: www.cgi.com.

About REI Systems:
REI Systems, serving Government for over 20 years, is the employee-owned software engineering company that supported the development and implementation of Checkbook NYC, in collaboration with the Comptroller's Office. REI Systems is an established leader in open government, open data, and transparency solutions, having created a number of engaging and innovative government websites, including DATA.gov, USAspending.gov, ITDashboard.gov, and Performance.gov. Please visit REI at www.reisystems.com and follow us on Twitter.

Visit www.comptroller.nyc.gov for the latest news, events, and initiatives.
Follow Comptroller Liu on Twitter. To receive Twitter updates via text message, text "follow johncliu" to 40404. View the latest Comptroller's office videos on YouTube.

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