

The Importance of the Hansard to CSOs and Research in a Digital World

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Outline

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Opening & Framing

- Parliaments face growing public scrutiny, changing political dynamics, and a digital world that refuses to wait.
- **Digital Hansard = More than a transcript**
 - **It is a pillar of democracy, a tool for accountability, and, increasingly, a beacon for civil society and research.**

The Accountability Gap

- **The Black Hole** - Lack of reliable data on MPs' decisions and voting patterns.
- Public unaware of motivations behind parliamentary decisions.
- Voice votes obscure deeper debates.
- **Key Question:** Who do MPs really represent?

Hansard: A Tool for Accountability

1. Reveals debates, arguments, motivations.
2. Holds MPs accountable to public, not private interests.
3. Essential for transparency.

Empowering the Fifth Estate

- CSOs, Researchers, Journalists rely on Hansard.
- Key questions they ask:
 1. Are MPs fulfilling their campaign promises?
 2. Are laws being passed in the public interest?
 3. Is the parliamentary discourse improving over time, or deteriorating?
 4. And critically, who really holds influence in our legislative processes?

How Digital Hansards Make an Impact

1. Tracking Promises vs. Action

- Campaign vs. parliamentary rhetoric

2. Monitoring Accountability and Integrity

- Voting patterns, debate quality, corruption

3. Enable Long-Term Research

- MP participation in debate on key issues,
evolution of language over time

How Digital Hansards Make an Impact Cont'd

4. Supporting Investigative Journalism

- Fact-checking conflicting claims

5. Advancing Legal & Rights Advocacy

- Evidence in court on legislative intent

6. Civic Education

- Used in classrooms to simulate real debates

The Power of Digital Access

1. Democratizes information access.
2. Removes bureaucratic barriers.
3. Reduces research costs.
4. Enables issue specialization.
5. Fosters cross-border collaboration.

From Record Keepers to Democracy Builders

- 1. Custodians of democratic memory - enablers of accountability, guardians of transparency, and partners in nation-building.**
- 2. Invest in timely, searchable, accessible Hansards.**
- 3. Ensure records empower citizens and researchers.**

Thank You