Chile's 'Power-opedia' shines light on elites

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A man looks at the Poderopedia website in Santiago, on January 16, 2013. Journalists and concerned citizens can now trawl for conflicts of interest among Chile's political and business elites thanks to a new startup based on Wikipedia.

Launched late last year, "Poderopedia" (Spanish for Power-opedia), aims to encourage greater transparency by shining a light on the complex network of political and business connections in the country.

The website, which already has won a Knight News Challenge prize, maps out politicians' connections based on public information, such as government and business databases, financial statements and directories.

Journalists then verify the information before mapping the connections.

"Knowing who are in the spheres of influence of power, and what they have, helps you understand a lot of things," Founder and CEO Miguel Paz, a journalist by training, told AFP.

So far, about 4,000 people, businesses and organizations have been mapped.

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