10 ESSENTIAL STEPS TO OPEN YOUR DATA AND COMMUNICATE BETTER

Whether you are a public authority or a private company, you may be collecting or producing data that can benefit society as a whole. Sharing such data is the future of any transparent and accountable organization. It will not only empower your stakeholders (team members, employees, citizens or partners). It will also improve efficiency and foster innovation within and beyond your organization.

Placing your data in the spotlight can however also be a true challenge. Where do you start? How do you organize your data? How do you ensure that you're taking full advantage of the potential of your data? And how do you encourage the reuse of your data?

At Opendatasoft, we provide you with a solution to help you visualize, analyze and share your data in one place. In other words, we help you make sense of your data!

Follow this easy 10-step checklist and watch your data go bright.

1

START SMALL

Most organizations start their open data program with only a few datasets. Limiting data volume helps you think like a startup.

- You can share your data and get early feedback.
- You can convert your coworkers to embrace the power of data as you grow.
- You can change your approach, if need be, in the early stages of the process.

Focus on producing quality data and mastering best practices. Leave the technical details to us!

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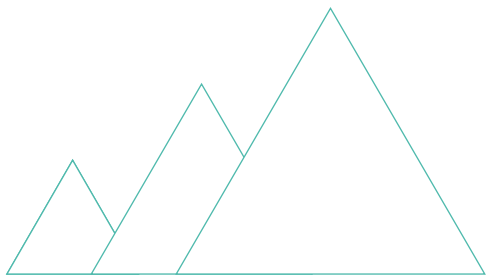
2

PICK A TOPIC

This is the easy part. Look for what types of public data your organization is collecting or producing. It can be anything from the amount of energy consumed per household to real-time traffic information, or figures on the number of loans issued in a given country.

Remember that you need to start small. Pick a topic that will allow you to generate a first dataset within days. Your first users will give you valuable feedback and you will grow your project in full confidence.
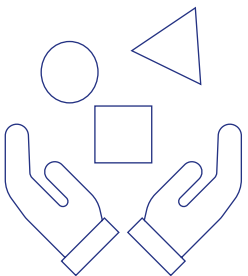
Some of our favorites:
Current Employment Statistics
**World Power Plants Database**
Air Quality Data
Street Art in Brussels

3 YOU DON'T NEED TO BE TECHNICAL TO LAUNCH A DATA PROJECT

If you haven't started your open data portal yet it is probably because you feel like you don't have the right skills. You're neither technical nor a data expert.

The good news is that you don't need to be either. More than anything else, you need a good understanding of your data and what it can bring to the wider community. Our client support team will lead you all along the way and help you set up a single platform on which users can visualize, analyze and share your information.
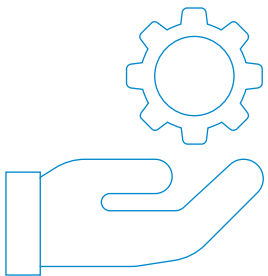
4

PUT YOUR DATA IN CONTEXT

Context is crucial. It will make your data truly bright and give your users a better understanding of the information you are trying to convey. The context is usually contained in what is known as metadata. Here are some details you may want to include:

- Title
- Description
- Keywords
- Legal information
- License and attribution required
- Geographical and temporal coverage
- Granularity and completeness
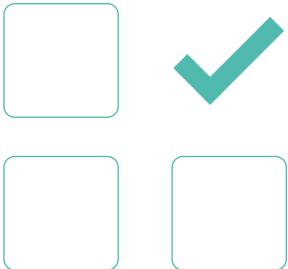- Date of publication, last modification and update frequency
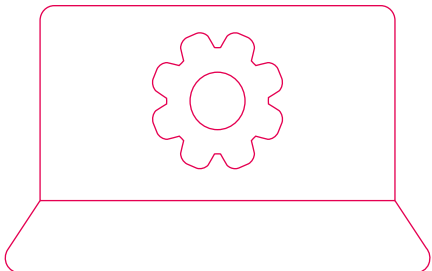
5 STRUCTURE YOUR DATA

To be used and reused, your data should be available in standard formats. Our platform allows you to export your data in one or several of the following formats:

- CSV
- JSON
- GeoJSON

Your data should be machine-readable. Say goodbye to handwritten documents, scans and PDFs.

6

PICK A LICENSE

Explicit licensing is mandatory even if you wish to put your data in the Public Domain. You'll find below a list of the most common licenses for open data:

- Open Database License: share-alike and attribution
- Public Domain Dedication and License
- Open Data Commons Attribution License

Don't hesitate to use the latest version of Creative Commons licenses. They are international.

If you ask for attribution, keep it as minimal as possible: the name of your organization and a link to the original dataset for instance.
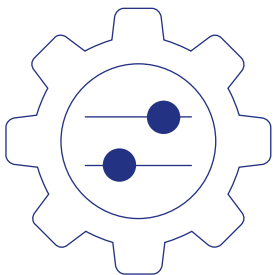
7

MAKE SURE YOUR DATA CAN BE SHARED

A great way to strengthen data availability is to generate APIs (Application Programming Interfaces). APIs allow users to build applications around your data. Thanks to APIs, every time you update your datasets, it will sync up with your users' applications.

Monitoring API use also allows for detailed knowledge of how data are used.

- Think API first
- Focus on availability
- Make it real-time
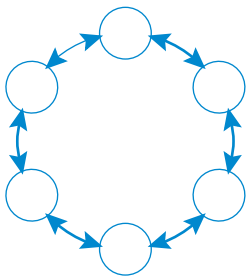
8 PUT IT ONLINE

Data is truly open when it is quickly and easily accessible. Create your very own Opendatasoft portal dedicated to the information you want to share with the public. This portal will allow you to gather your data in one single hub and easily generate visualizations and APIs. End-users will also be able to readily browse through your datasets.

Remember - If users are required to sign up before using your data, it is not truly open.

- Put it online.
- Set up a portal.
- No mandatory sign up.
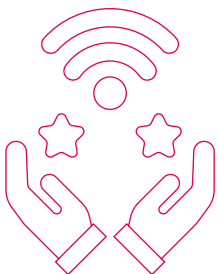
9

TELL THE WORLD ABOUT IT

Once your data is online, you should ensure that it can be easily located. Don't be shy - set up a social media account, a website or a blog to share it with people. If your data has viral potential, it may spread like wildfire.

To make sure your open data get the attention it deserves, tell the world about them. Suggest using them during hack days, Meetups or conferences...

- Find your audience and engage them.
- Allow your data to be reused within applications.
- Make it attractive.

10

KEEP IT FRESH

Open data is a long-term contribution to your community. To foster innovation in the long run, your data should be updated whenever possible. It takes time and energy but it won't be long before you reap the rewards.

Our platform will even help you automatically collect data from different IT systems in order to publish real-time information.

- You're in for the long run
- Keep it fresh
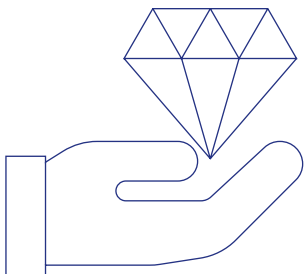
WHAT'S NEXT? REPEAT THE SEQUENCE!

Bravo! You've just successfully started your open data pilot project. Now that you know the essential steps, just do them again with a more daring dataset (such as real-time information, datasets containing images...)!

Eventually, your open data will get reused and might even get showcased on some famous data-related media.

Some open data Hall-of-Fame websites:
- The Guardian Data Blog
- The New York Times
- Reddit

Now it's your turn. Tell us about your open data project.

ABOUT OPENDATASOFT

The Opendatasoft market-leading data sharing solution allows users to easily publish, manage, combine, analyze, visualize, and share real-time data in a variety of formats on a single platform.

Opendatasoft operates in 18 countries with clients ranging from small companies and towns (including the City of Paris, Brussels, Bristol, Eindhoven, or Vancouver in Canada) to large multinationals (Schneider Electric, Indigo, Energias de Portugal (EDP), Veolia, Total, Enedis, Saint-Gobain).

For more information: ask-ods@opendatasoft.com

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Leading solution for data sharing

**Make
your data
bright**