

# FULLTITLE (Faq)\_

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## General

### 1. *Who manages Open Data Commons?*

Open Data Commons is maintained by the Open Knowledge Foundation.

### 2. *I want to get in touch. How do I do that?*

Have a question not answered here, want to participate in our work, want to get in touch for whatever reason? See the contact page for information on how do so including details of our public community discussion list.

### 3. *Why does openness and licensing matter?*

Why bother about openness and licensing for data? After all they don't matter in themselves: what we really care about are things like the progress of human knowledge or the freedom to understand and share.

However, open data is crucial to progress on these more fundamental items. It's crucial because open data is so much easier to break-up and recombine, to use and reuse. We therefore want people to have incentives to make their data open and for open data to be easily usable and reusable — i.e. for open data to form a 'commons'.

A good definition of openness acts as a standard that ensures different open datasets are 'interoperable' and therefore do form a commons. Licensing is important because it reduces uncertainty. Without a license you don't know where you, as a user, stand: when are you allowed to use this data? Are you allowed to give to others? To distribute your own changes, etc?

Together, a definition of openness, plus a set of conformant licenses deliver clarity and simplicity. Not only is interoperability ensured but people can know at a glance, and without having to go through a whole lot of legalese, what they are free to do. (For more see this article and this post).

Thus, licensing and definitions are important even though they are only a small part of the overall picture. If we get them wrong they will keep on getting in the way of everything else.

If we get them right we can stop worrying about them and focus our full energies on other things.

For more information, read this Open Knowledge Foundation blogpost.

### 1. ***What do you mean by open data?***

See the Open Definition which sets out principles that define “openness” in relation to data and content.

### 1. ***Do I need this legal stuff, can't I just post my data online?***

The simple is: no — and yes you do need this legal stuff. Whether one likes it or not there are a whole bunch of jurisdictions in the world where there are IP rights in data(bases). Thus if you want your data to be open, even if that means public domain, you need to apply a license (or something very like a license).

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