

Introduction to Open Data

Open Data is the idea that certain data should be freely available to everyone to use and republish as they wish, without restrictions from copyright, patents or other mechanisms of control. The philosophy behind Open Data has been long established in science, but the term "open data" itself is recent, gaining popularity with the rise of the open government movement and, especially, with the launch of Open Data initiatives by the US Federal government. These initiatives have been driven by the demand for transparency in government and the recognition that engagement with constituents can lead to increased innovation and economic development.

Today, Open Data is defined as needing to meet the following criteria:

1. It must be available to everyone, for free, without restriction on re-use.
2. Users must be able to find it easily and download it as raw data.
3. It must be useable and modifiable – specifically, machine readable.



A scanned PDF with tables of numeric data does not qualify as a source for Open Data because it is not machine readable. When a user downloads Open Data, the result usually looks like a spreadsheet or table. Once downloaded, users may manipulate and merge it with other data to reveal some conclusion or insights. This derived "knowledge" can be aggregated into works of value.

Over the past 20 years, most government entities and private enterprises have manually developed large web sites to present various forms of abridged data to their constituents. Making an annual budget report or a schedule of upcoming events available to the citizens of a local government are typical examples. But these examples fail to meet the requirements for openness.



Open Data is often non-textual material including geographic maps, scientific and statistical figures, survey and election results, demographic, weather, environmental, transportation, and financial information. These types of data can be visualized in a variety of graphical formats and can be downloaded for further analysis. Value can also be added by third parties through utilization of the data in mobile apps or other innovative creations.

Benefits of Open Data

Transparency and Engagement: Opening data is the most direct means to reassure the public of government's commitment to transparency. Instead of waiting for slow formal requests for data to be processed, interested parties may directly resolve their own questions. For local governments, citizens can become more engaged when they have access to all the facts. Advancements in all types of scientific research depend upon open access to raw data.

Efficiency Improvements: Publishing data as Open Data can save time and money by reducing the cost of manually processing FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) requests. Even greater savings can be realized when data sharing leads to new insights and increased efficiencies, or third parties develop solutions that directly help their communities.

Innovation: By leveraging the imagination and energy of third party developers, and involving students, businesses, and advocates in the analysis of Open Data, the data publisher can benefit from innovative solutions to challenges that would otherwise be difficult to produce internally.

Improved Decision Making: Both the private sector and the public sector are increasingly dependent upon data analysis for a keener understanding of the factors that impact their businesses and communities. Open Data expands the breadth and depth of such insight.

Economic Development: The sharing of data is inspiring greater economic development within local communities as well as across global communities. Scientists, social advocates, elected officials, non-profit and business leaders are all seeing the economic impact of embracing Open Data.

Publishing Open Data

An Open Data Portal is a web-based system that enables you to collect your existing data from multiple sources and in multiple formats, and then publish that data in ways that users may easily view, download, and use. Tags and filters produce an organized and searchable catalog. Tables of data, charts, graphs, and geographic maps can be arranged side-by-side into dashboards that share subject matter. Programmers have access to data through an API.

Good examples of Open Data sites can be found for the cities of [San Jose, CA](#) and [Sacramento, CA](#), as well as the [County of Sacramento](#). These sites demonstrate the wide range of subject matter that can be opened up via an Open Data Portal.



The largest newspaper in Buenos Aires, [La Nación](#), uses Open Data to publish datasets that are frequently requested by the public. [Santa Clarita, CA](#), used an Open Data Portal as a means to publish results of their local election. In the process, they not only saved significant money, but provided a much deeper set of information to their citizens.

Introduction to Junar

Junar is an early leader in the field of Open Data publishing. We offer a cloud-based Open Data Platform used by innovative public and private organizations around the world. Our product is delivered via a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) hosting model, wherein all hardware, software and data storage is included in one convenient annual subscription.



Our platform is praised by our customers as being easy to use, easy to own and easy to maintain. It can be supported with minimal IT resources. Junar enjoys a reputation for superior software support and high customer satisfaction.



Junar believes that Open Data will become so pervasive, that every data-rich organization will need an Open Data Portal linked to their web site. For this reason, we have structured our entire business towards the goal delivering a full-featured, fully-supported, turnkey system in the most cost effective manner possible for our clients.

Incorporated in Delaware in 2010, Junar has offices in: Palo Alto, Dallas, San Jose, Costa Rica; Santiago, Chile; and Israel.