

The Open Data Foundation

A non-profit organization promoting the adoption of global metadata standards and the development of open-source solutions for the management and use of statistical data.



What is ODAF?

The Open Data Foundation (ODaF) is a US-based non-profit organization promoting the adoption of global metadata standards and the development of open-source solutions for the management and use of statistical data. We focus on improving data and metadata accessibility and overall quality in support of research, policy making, and transparency, in the fields of Social, Behavioral and Economic sciences (SBE).

Why ODAF?

The **Open Data Foundation** (ODaF) was established to fill a gap in the area of statistical data and metadata management in Social, Behavioral and Economic sciences (SBE). Data producers, data archivists and researchers have gradually realized the importance of metadata for the production, preservation, dissemination, discovery and use of high-quality data. They are expressing a strong interest in adopting specifications such as the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI), the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange Standard (SDMX), Dublin Core (DC), ISO/IEC 11179, ISO 19115, and others made available through the efforts of standards-setting agencies and consortiums.

The adoption of these metadata specifications has been impaired by the lack of tools and agreed guidelines for their use. Building such tools requires the coordination of strong information technology and cross-domain expertise that is not typically a function of these agencies. This is not by lack of interest: it is simply not their mandate, mission or responsibility.

The **Open Data Foundation** was incorporated in 2006 to provide a place where experts from all of these areas can come together to help build an open global infrastructure for the use of statistical data. This vision requires a coordinated approach to the use of technology, with contributions from technologists and standards bodies as well as from social scientists, researchers, and official statisticians.

What does ODAF do?

- Support and coordinate the development of open-source tools for management of statistical data and metadata
- Provide technical assistance to agencies for the adoption of metadata specifications, best practices in data management, and capacity building
- Provide access to public metadata collections and registries
- Promote international cooperation and address global issues
- Develop training resources and reference materials
- Provide web-based facilities to foster the dialog between various communities

What is Open Data?

Open Data must answer the needs of both the producer and user communities. We see it as having the following characteristics:

- Fit for use and purpose: consistent, coherent, exhaustive, timely, relevant, and providing the answers to real questions
- Accessible: can be discovered, accessed, and understood
- Safe and secure: physical access to the actual data is controlled and respondents are protected in accordance to statistical principles and laws
- Well documented: data is accompanied by high-quality metadata that satisfies casual users, researchers and producers. It captures sufficient information to replicate the work (replication standard) and is based on accepted standards of quality and completeness.

Why Open Source?

Besides commonly accepted advantages of open source, we see such model particularly advantageous in our case:

- It makes products available to everyone: like metadata specifications and standards, the tools are public goods and should be freely accessible;
- It facilitates concerted development efforts: we expect several organizations and individuals to be involved in the development of tools;
- It ensures long term sustainability: products are not tied to a specific project and do not disappear when the project ends.



Contact

For more information, visit our web site at <http://www.opendatafoundation.org> or contact us by email at info@opendatafoundation.org



Projects

ODaF is a project-oriented organization. Through the management team, organizations or individuals can submit project proposals for the approval of the Board of Directors. We can also provide assistance in drafting technical specifications, validating compliance with standards and best practices, ensuring compatibility with other products, and identifying resources or seeking funding sources. An ODaF project is expected to follow the general foundation principles and be aligned on recommended specifications and development architecture. The execution of the project itself can be carried out by external organizations or individuals.

Membership

Participation in ODaF is open to everyone. Directors, advisors and members of the management team are positions that require the approval from the Board of Directors. Individual membership is however open to any individual and simply needs to be sponsored by a director, advisor or a manager.

Contributing

Whether you are an individual, a small or large organization, from the private or public sector, or from a developed or developing country, there is a good chance you can contribute to ODaF.

The ODaF directors, advisors and managers are currently non-remunerated positions. We do however require sources of funding to maintain our ICT infrastructure and cover operational or administrative costs. ODaF funding mechanisms are based on donations and a 15% overhead on sponsored projects. Financial contributions to the foundation can therefore be made through direct donations (tax deductible in the US) or by executing your projects under the ODaF umbrella.

There are also many opportunities for in kind support. Donating time through participation in open source development projects and helping us with operational activities or the maintenance of the ICT infrastructure are great ways to contribute. If you have the right profile, you may also want to be involved as an advisor. Other contributions include donating computers or office equipment, sharing server space, providing facilities for meetings or conferences, etc.

Besides direct contributions, advertising the existence of the foundation, fostering the adoption of recommended metadata specifications, using community tools, or adopting best practices in data and metadata management are also good indirect ways to contribute to ODaF's mission. Please contact us if you have any question, idea or suggestion.

Who is ODaF?

Realizing the vision of a universal statistical infrastructure requires expertise in wide variety of areas. ODaF brings together preeminent experts from many communities of interest: information and communication technology, standards and technology, national and international official statistics, central banking, social sciences research and data archiving, and international development and relief organizations.

Our advisors, directors, managers and project-team members include many of the individuals responsible for creating and implementing the foremost statistical standards today. They represent the interests of the user community as well, providing a practical knowledge of the challenges we face.

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