

TIME FOR OPEN DATA IN CULTURE

Our organization is interested in open data, but we don't know much about it and even less about the workload it entails. We're also not sure we're digitally literate enough. We want to know more before we jump in.



It's easy to see how getting up to speed with open data can seem confusing. This guide will help you learn more about the potential uses of open data and how open data gets disseminated, used, and reused. You will find reassuring information about the private and public aspects of data. Examples of cultural organizations that have opened their data are showcased to help get you started on the path of open data.



I can't wait to learn more about it! Why is open data so important?

THE SPREAD OF OPEN DATA AROUND THE WORLD

Open data has become a national and international imperative, and many initiatives have been launched in its wake. Wikidata, for example, is a free, collaborative, and multilingual database that collects structured data to feed the Wikimedia movement's projects. In Québec, municipalities make their data available as open data on Données Québec to facilitate, among other things, the life of citizens. In France, the Ministry of Culture has created Data Culture, a vast repository that gathers open data related to culture and heritage. These are all ways to promote democracy, ensure greater governance and deploy more culture in the public space.



WHAT IS DONNÉES QUÉBEC?

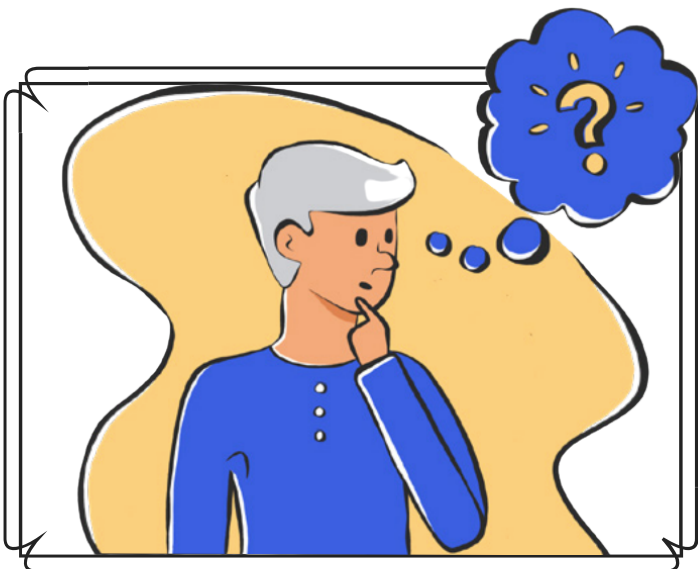
Données Québec is a portal that gathers and displays open data sets available in Québec. It was set up jointly by the municipalities and the Québec government. It's a collaborative hub for open data from and about Québec, a repository of 1,200+ datasets of all kinds in various fields of activity that allows the government, municipalities, and organizations to deposit data which is freely available for use by anyone.

WHAT IS OPEN DATA?

Open data is defined as data disseminated in a structured way, in open format, in the form of digital files, of public or private origin, which can be freely shared, used and benefited from by anyone, without any technical, legal, or financial restriction, in accordance with a commons license that guarantees free access and reuse of the data.

Open data is based on a few fundamental principles:

- **Availability and access:** Data must be easily accessible in its entirety in an open, convenient, and editable format.
- **Reuse and republication:** Data must be provided under conditions that allow its reuse and republication.
- **Universal participation:** Anyone should be able to use, reuse, and republish the data without any scope of activity or "non-commercial use" restriction.



When I think about our organization's data, the contact database comes to mind, and I have to say that the privacy aspect worries me. We don't want to lose the trust of the people and organizations we work with! What about sensitive data?

RESPECT FOR PRIVACY

Some data is highly confidential or legally sensitive. Contact data about users or consumers and data related to intellectual property or organizational information should not be disclosed. Respecting data confidentiality is one of the fundamental principles of open data. This is not the kind of data you should be considering for your open data efforts.



Phew! That's reassuring! I've also heard that there are different ways to disseminate open data and that there are different licenses. We're a bit confused about this. What do we need to know about this and how does our organization benefit from disseminating our data?

DISSEMINATING OPEN DATA ON DONNÉES QUÉBEC AND TYPES OF LICENSES

There are several ways to disseminate data with an open license. You can choose a Creative Commons license (different CC licenses offer different permissions and restrictions). You can add it to Wikidata. You can deposit it on Données Québec. Or you can make your data available on your own website (with a Creative Commons license, for example) or on demand.

USEFULNESS OF DISSEMINATING DATA ON DONNÉES QUÉBEC

Sharing some of your data on a collaborative portal such as Données Québec allows other organizations and Web and app developers to find data in one place, to cross-reference it and to put it to good use in projects that will certainly benefit you. Sharing your data will also help increase your visibility in the digital world and, more broadly, promote better discoverability of Québec cultural content.

Sharing data on Données Québec is also an excellent showcase if your organization is soliciting partners and seeking technology suppliers or financial support. It shows that you understand web culture and are committed to it.

There are several open data sets readily available on the web that can be useful to your organization. Explore them now!

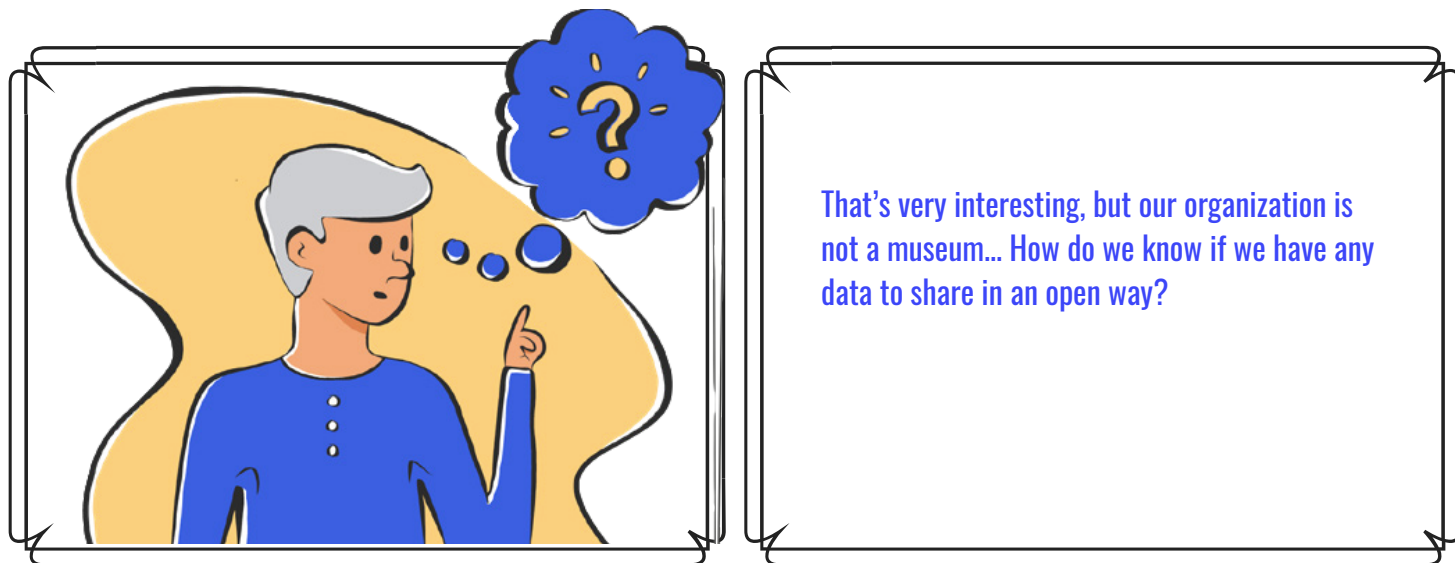
I'd like to know which organizations are using open data and how they are benefiting from it...



OPEN DATA USES

Here are some examples of open-data applications to discover. You may already know some of them without knowing that they involve open data!

- Combining open data from public transit (buses, subways, ferries, and commuter trains) and bike- and car-sharing systems in several cities around the world, the Québec-based Transit application allows users to find the best way to get to where they are going.
- By cross-referencing data from the Répertoire des adaptations musicales with DBpedia, Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BANQ) created a visualization interface to explore French-language musical adaptations. Using cross-referencing, we discover, for example, that Eddy Marnay is the composer who has most often collaborated with Céline Dion. By releasing its own Répertoire data, BANQ is opening the door to new imaginative and creative apps.
- Planners in Québec municipalities use the Territoire application, which brings together a number of open data sets from various fields, such as transportation, the environment, local services and administrative boundaries. Recently, data from the Répertoire du patrimoine culturel du Québec was integrated into the app to help urban planners consider heritage components in land use planning. Other cultural data of interest to urban planning, such as the location of cultural institutions (museums, theaters, etc.), could also be added.
- Cultural data is already available for consultation and reuse on the Données Québec portal, including data on the collections of the Musée d'art contemporain des Laurentides, the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, the Musée de la civilisation, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal and of Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec.



That's very interesting, but our organization is not a museum... How do we know if we have any data to share in an open way?

We live in a world of data. Chances are your organization has some! Here are two tips to help you determine which data can be released as open data.



TIP 1: TAKE A TOUR OF YOUR WEBSITE.

Right off the bat, there is a lot of public information on your website that could be shared through an open data license. Here are some things to look at that will help you determine what data you could release:

- Does your website have a **search engine** to browse through a directory of works, such as music, film or literature?
- Do you have a **calendar** of your events and activities?
- Do you post a directory of your **members** or other types of directories? What data could you make available without disclosing personal data?
- Do you rent **space**? Are spec sheets and rental costs posted on your website? Do you offer other services?
- Do you offer **training**? The title and description of a training course, as well as the name of the trainer, can all be useful open data.
- Do you have a **history** of your organization? Do you have archival photos?
- Do you have a web-based **archive**, such as a list of past editions, speakers and guests at an event, conference or symposium, and the topics that were discussed?

Also, some non-sensitive data available on Google Analytics can be interesting to collect and make accessible, like the most searched for words on your website.



TIP 2: EXPLORE YOUR COMPUTER SERVER.

Your organization's documentation, various files and other databases contain a wealth of information that would benefit from being shared as open data, such as:

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- text or image-related information about shows or activities
- posters, speakers, admission fees or themes of conferences, symposiums, or other events
- training materials and instructional sheets
- statistics (attendance, number of shows presented, etc.)
- various lists (collections, city tours, board members, list of branches, etc.)

This type of data, commonly found in databases, Word documents or Excel files, becomes valuable when it is transferred to an open data model.

I never realized that our organization could be so rich in data! Will we be supported in our efforts if we decide to move forward?



The team from Données Québec will be happy to accompany you on your journey and help you adopt the best method to complete your project!

We hope this guide has helped you understand open data and the benefits to your organization of sharing your data.

If your organization is undergoing a digital transformation and would like to collaborate with other organizations to improve its digital literacy, we invite you to get involved and to contribute to enriching the digital universe with your cultural data! Many cultural actors are already sharing open data. Join the movement to open data.



HOW DO WE DO IT?

- Set at least one goal for your organization to share licensed open data.
- Identify the data in your organization that has the greatest potential for dissemination and reuse.
- Explore the data available on Données Québec to see what you might find useful and what organizations like yours have shared.
- Draw up a data sharing plan and communicate it to your team.
- Contact Données Québec for information on how to go about realizing your project and getting the help you need.
- Devise a work plan to produce a high-quality data set.
- Take advantage of the added value of your data and the new relationships that its dissemination could bring you!

Organizations are encouraged to provide good quality data based on various criteria regarding the integrity, the completeness, the availability, the granularity (level of data detail) and the interoperability of their data. Données Québec will help you in reviewing your organization's data against these criteria.



This document is a free translation of *Pour des données ouvertes en culture*, a Québec government publication. The original version of this guide is available on the website of Québec's digital culture plan: <http://culturenumerique.mcc.gouv.qc.ca/2020-12-14-pour-des-donnees-ouvertes-en-culture>. This translation was produced as part of CAPACOA's Linked Digital Future initiative with the support of the Government of Canada and the Canada Council for the Arts.

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