Open Knowledge Definition

Return to Open Government Data (The Book)

The Open Knowledge Foundation (OKF) created the Open Knowledge Definition, now called the Open Definition, in 2006. It draws heavily on definitions of open source software. Version 1.1, completed in November 2009, is excerpted below and can be found at opendefinition.org.

The Open Definition is not specific to government-held data. It is intended to address a broader notion of openness and addresses many concerns that arose for open source software that other collections of principles did not think to include. However, I noted in No Discrimination and License-Free that I believed this definition is too weak to be applied to government data, as it would allow governments to control use of the data through licensing. In countries besides the United States licensing is more common and accepted.

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