

Open research data without borders

Book Title : Issues in Open Research Data
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The concept of open data may be viewed as a consequence of open source movement since the 80's of the last century. The word “open” is very old, but the inherent concept of it has been rediscovered in the context of open source movement. Open means^[1] “anyone can freely access, use, modify, and share for any purpose (subject, at most, to requirements that preserve provenance, and openness).” Open data are thus resonates a viewpoint that certain data (may be context-specific or subject-specific) should be freely available to everyone to use and republish at per their intention, without restrictions from copyright, patents, or other mechanisms of control. The major objectives of the open data movement are similar to those of other “Open” movements such as open source, open hardware, open content, and open access. The term “Open Data” has gained recognition since the 90's of the last century along with the increasing popularity of the internet, World Wide Web and the launch of open-data government initiatives such as Data.gov and Data.gov.uk.

The book entitled “Issues in Open Research Data” and edited by Samuel A. Moore covers numbers of aspects on open data. It contains total nine chapters on different areas that include content mining, drug discovery, psychology, health sciences, earth science, climatology, economics, and paleontology. The everyday use of open data in these subjects has been discussed.

The legal issues are covered in the chapter entitled “Open Content Mining” by Peter Murray-Rust *et al.* The examples of text mining in chemical patent and trees are useful for the beginners. The chapter entitled “The Need to Humanize Open Science” by Eric C. Kansa put forth a critical view on open data and openness in general. He opined that more attention needs to be focused on the broader institutional structures that govern how research is currently conducted and less on the narrow technical and licensing interoperability issues. In the third chapter entitled “Data Sharing in a Humanitarian Organization: The Experience of Médecins Sans Frontières” by Unni Karunakara, data sharing policy of a medical humanitarian organization and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Doctors Without Borders, is discussed in details. The author described how the policy was developed, the principles underlying it, and the practical measures taken to facilitate data sharing. Next, Antony J. Williams *et al.* discussed the importance of open data in drug discovery in the chapter entitled “Why Open Drug Discovery Needs Four Simple Rules for Licensing Data and Models.” The importance of data licensing in the areas of science and technology has been discussed here, which is a nascent idea. They suggested four rules for licensing in the area of drug discovery. The open data issues are discussed in the last five chapters from subject-specific approaches. Sarah Callaghan's chapter sketched a comprehensive outline of open data in the areas of Earth and climate sciences. Several barriers to openness are discussed, and a case study of one author's personal experience is shared. Tom Pollard and Leo Anthony Celi covered open data issues in the area of health care. The issues related with the privacy of patient are discussed in the context of openness. Wouter van den Bos *et al.* discussed data sharing issues in the area

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of psychological sciences. According to the authors, open science is a more powerful tool for smooth functioning and easy progress of research. They emphasized on the amendment of researchers' mindset for better access of open data. In the next chapter, Velichka Dimitrova described the open data issues for the area of economics and the need for all economics data to be "open by default" facility. Finally, Ross Mounce presented issues of open data in the area of paleontology. The complicated state of licensing within the subject domain and the need for researchers to use licenses are discussed.

The editor already mentioned that "the book is not meant to be a comprehensive overview of open data, and there are of course absences of subjects and viewpoints." But it is true that whatever issues and aspects covered are up-to-date and worthwhile. It is helpful for scholars and researchers from concerned disciplines to enhance their

subject-specific knowledge regarding open data. The case studies given are interesting. The language is lucid, and style of presentation is focussed. It will help a novice of open data to gather an initial idea about the same.

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REFERENCE

1. Available from: <http://www.opendefinition.org/>. [Last accessed on 2015 Jul 17].

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