



# OPEN DATA MYTHS: WHAT'S THE TRUTH?



**There are many myths surrounding the opening of research data. This overview highlights the most widespread ones.**

**Myth 1: Open Data is difficult and time-consuming.**

This is not true. It is true that you need to prepare the data for sharing, choose a suitable repository, and store the data there. But there are ways to do this efficiently. You can also get help from experienced colleagues, data experts at your institution, or your library. And: Your preliminary work can be useful for yourself later on, because your research data will remain traceable for you in the long run and save you time afterwards. Because, for example, you no longer have to answer inquiries about access to your data or because you can answer queries about your data more easily.

**Myth 2: Open Data is too expensive.**

This is not true. Open Data does not necessarily have to cost a lot. Careful planning and documentation, avoiding errors in study design, data collection, and data archiving usually yield high-quality data and are therefore worthwhile. You will benefit from this for your own purpose as well as for sharing and reuse. In addition, you can usually apply for grants that cover additional costs for data preparation and documentation.

**Myth 3: I don't have any research data.**

This is probably not true. Research data can be quite different and take quite diverse forms: In principle, it is any information that has been collected, observed, generated, or created to validate or reproduce your research findings. For example, it can take the form of spreadsheets, text files, audio or video recordings, questionnaire forms, laboratory protocols, or computer code.

**Myth 4: My data is not interesting to anyone, so it is not worth sharing.**

This is not true. Your data may be of interest not only to colleagues in your research area, but also to researchers in other research areas who may use different analytical methods or combine them with other data to come up with new results. Furthermore, your data may also be useful to educators, policy makers, or the general public.

**Myth 5: It doesn't matter for my research career if I share this data.**

This is not true. Sharing your research data can have many beneficial consequences for your research career, including new collaboration opportunities and more visibility for your work. Open research data contributes to higher research quality, more knowledge transfer, and potentially faster research progress.

**Myth 6: My data is too sensitive to share.**

This is not necessarily true. In some cases, there are good reasons for closed or very limited access to research data. If the data itself cannot be shared, you can at least share the associated metadata. This allows other researchers to know, for instance, how the data might be accessed and cited. The FAIR principles for research data help making data accessible in an appropriate way. If you are unsure about the need to protect your data, you could, for example, talk to data protection officers, research colleagues, open data officers or research data management officers

**Myth 7: Open data means loss of control.**

This is not true. When you make your data available in a repository, you still have control over who can access the data or what others can do with it. In many repositories, it is possible to upload the data with restricted access, for example, so that it can only be accessed after an embargo period. In addition, you can usually choose between different licenses and thus determine the extent to which others can re-use your data and must name you as the author when re-using it. However, you should check whether such restrictions may conflict with funding guidelines to which you are bound.

**Myth 8: Others may benefit more from my data than I do.**

This is not true. There is no evidence that third parties could make more profit from your research data, steal your intellectual property, or misuse it. Instead, opening up your research data can bring you many benefits. These include more attention for your research or new collaboration opportunities. However, you also have the option to only make your research data freely available following an embargo period. On the other hand, by sharing your research data early, you can mark your personal focus in the research area. When others use your research data, they must cite you, giving you more credit for your research. Most repositories tag deposited data with a persistent identifier, such as a DOI, a publication date, and a timestamp. Thus, you can permanently prove that you are the author of this data

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