Open Licenses for Data and Content

Why do I keep seeing all these "open licenses" with different names and logos?
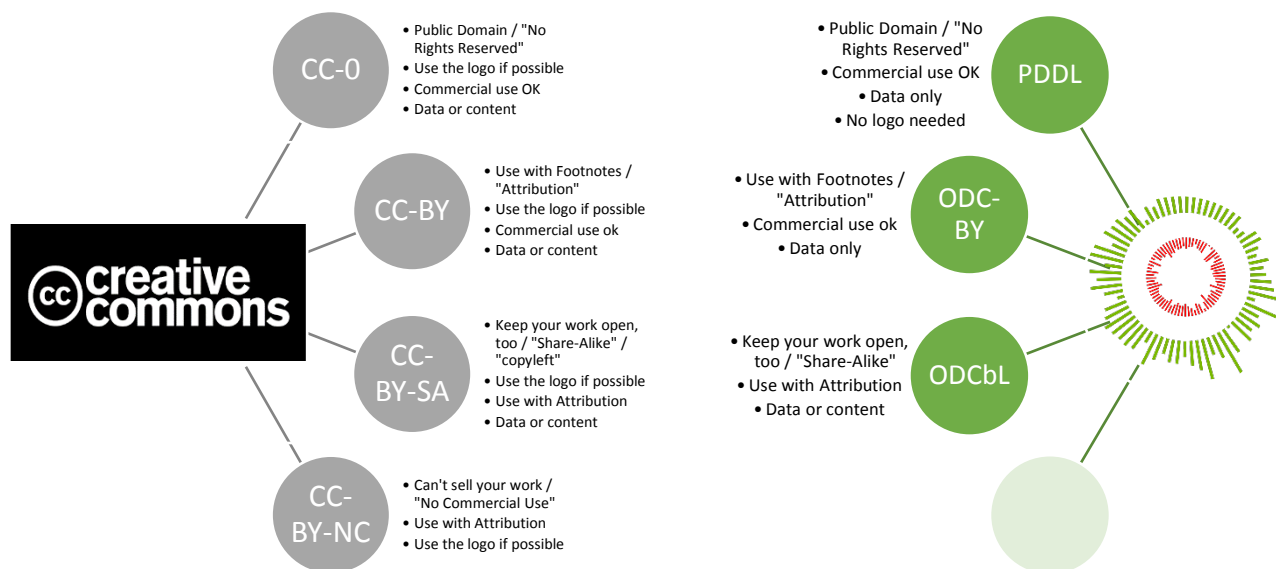
Shouldn't it all just be free and public?

Sure, free and public is great – it's what most of us are aiming for. But many people and communities get sensitive about things like plagiarism, mis-quoting, blocking access by some people, altering the original meaning, or profiting from re-selling a free public resource.

Smart people who use data responsibly are cautious. Remember the old adage "there's no such thing as a free lunch?" People may pass up an opportunity to use a community's open data for a good cause if they can't understand the terms. So data publishers are starting to use "open licensing" to be more explicit about exactly what they care about and what uses they'll allow.

Open licensing helps break down barriers associated with traditional copyright by granting permission to use materials in advance. Different types of subject matter (e.g. code, content, or data) are often times best served by different licenses to reflect their unique characteristics.

Open Content (OER)	Open Data
Open educational resources (OER) are teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits their free use and re-purposing. The sharing of OER can help reduce content acquisition costs, empower educators to personalize materials, and promote equity and innovation.	Open data is data that can be freely used, shared and built on by anyone, anywhere, for any purpose. The sharing of open data can help facilitate enhanced scientific collaboration, increase government and corporate transparency, and speed the discovery and understanding of solutions to societal needs.

CC-0
- Public Domain / "No Rights Reserved"
- Use the logo if possible
- Commercial use OK
- Data or content

CC-BY
- Use with Footnotes / "Attribution"
- Use the logo if possible
- Commercial use ok
- Data or content

CC-BY-SA
- Keep your work open, too / "Share-Alike" / "copyleft"
- Use the logo if possible
- Use with Attribution
- Data or content

CC-BY-NC
- Can't sell your work / "No Commercial Use"
- Use with Attribution
- Use the logo if possible

PDDL
- Public Domain / "No Rights Reserved"
- Commercial use OK
- Data only
- No logo needed

ODC-BY
- Use with Footnotes / "Attribution"
- Commercial use ok
- Data only

ODCbL
- Keep your work open, too / "Share-Alike"
- Use with Attribution
- Data or content

Common Examples of Open Licensing

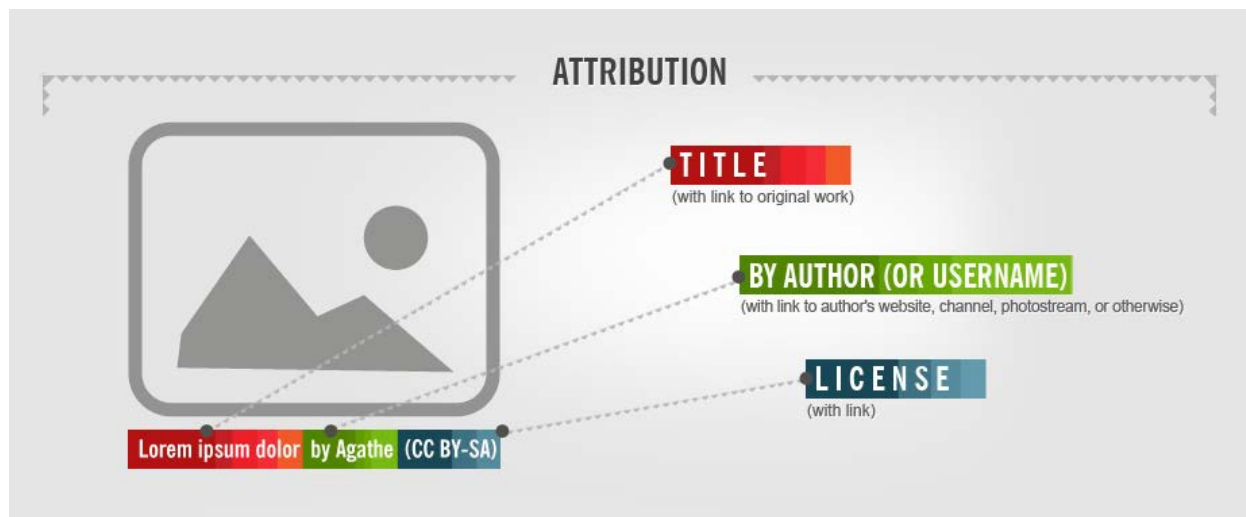| When you see:	It's about	… and it basically means:	… with these notes and caveats
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Federal Open Licensing Playbook | CC0

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