

# FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions

## How do I get questions answered that aren't on this list?

Email [data@cdc.gov](mailto:data@cdc.gov) and that mailbox is monitored by Brian and Linda. When they answer your question, they'll probably add it to this list.

## As a new Data.CDC.gov user, where should I start?

[Socrata publishes a series of 60-second videos for publishing and accessing data](#) that apply to our site. And they have a [useful set of tutorial articles on each function](#). If you had to pick a single tutorial, I would start with [Using the Socrata Data Management Experience](#) for data publishers and [Creating a Visualization in the Visualization Canvas](#) for everyone else.

## What is Open Data?

OMB Memo M-13-13 Open Data Policy defines open data as "publicly available data structured in a way that enables the data to be fully discoverable and usable by end users." (p5) with seven principles of public, described, accessible, reusable, complete, timely, managed post-release. Note that there are other, more broad definitions used by other communities (eg [OpenDefinition](#)) but Open Data used by CDC will refer to the OMB definition unless otherwise noted.

## How do I add featured content to my category?

If your userid has publisher permissions, you can update the category's featured content with data sets, articles, or other items of interest related to your data. You can also write up a description for your category using [Markdown](#) to add minimal html like links and formatting. [Socrata has a nice tutorial page with training on how to do this](#).

## How do I use data on Data.CDC.gov?

Every data set has [a page describing the data](#) and how to get to it with specific examples to [browse online](#), [access via an API](#), or [through a wide variety of visualization and analysis packages](#).

## How do I add data on Data.CDC.gov?

If you are a current user, there are tutorials below on how to [add](#), improve, tag with metadata, update, etc. your data. Most data stewards upload their excel or csv directly through the web site, and you can also update data via the Socrata API. And we have some tools for automatic uploads. Contact [data@cdc.gov](mailto:data@cdc.gov) for more info. Only authorized CDC data stewards can add and modify data sets on Data.CDC.gov. Please email [data@cdc.gov](mailto:data@cdc.gov) to request access. Each data steward represents the program that owns the data set and coordinated with their respective organizations with the agency.

## Do you perform any data quality checks on data sets hosted on Data.CDC.gov?

Each data set is managed by its data steward. Each steward performs quality checks as appropriate for their program and center. This may vary from set to set depending on many factors, so review the metadata for more information on how the data were validated. We maintain a list data validation tools lower down on this page.

## What should I set as the bureauCode and programCode on my data sets?

These values are the same for all CDC data sets. "009:20" for bureauCode specifying CDC as the publisher. "009:020" for programCode. These are specified by HHS.

## How should I set temporal metadata for my data set?

Temporal metadata helps users and their visualization and analysis tools understand the time period for a data set in a machine-readable, easy to use manner. Data.gov uses the [Project Open Data Schema for temporal metadata](#) which uses [ISO8601 Date](#) definitions with a solidus ("/") between time periods. So for example, if your data set contains data from 2015 to 2017, it is represented by "2015/2017" in Data.CDC.gov's "Temporal Availability" metadata field.

## Is there a way for Users to save all of their Filters within Data.CDC.gov so they can apply as needed?

Yes. Users can create their own private filtered views to see the data just the way they like it. No one else can see it and it doesn't show up in the catalog. It's also possible for data stewards to create more standardized filtered views from a data set that are reviewed and published by the program. Functionally, they are the same, just the audience is different. [Socrata has a tutorial on how to set one up](#).

## Why are your Wiki avatars so boring?

If you look at our avatars on the various posts and pages, you'll see a little cartoon image for each user (typically Brian or Linda, but maybe some day others). We used to have useful photos, but during security review, one of our awesome collaborators in the security review states that all photos were proscribed PII and not allowed. While we disagreed with them since the photo was uploaded directly by the user at their own choice, Brian didn't really care too much, so made everyone get rid of their photos. We also collectively agreed never to let users google our names because they might see photos of us on CDC's web site. And we agreed to not worry about this and be excited about being able to use the cool, free services offered by Atlassian (the maker of this wiki) for open source projects like ours.

## I'm getting an error accessing my private test data set via the OData API?

Data.CDC.gov provides an API to access all data sets by default using a variety of standards such as [OData v2](#), [ODATA v4](#), [JSON](#), [CSV](#), and others. When a data steward publishes a data set, these URLs all become active and accessible in the autogenerated API usage documentation for the dataset (eg, [this one for the Science Clips dataset](#)). However, if your dataset is in testing and not published yet, you will need to use an app token to identify you or whatever app or tool you're using to gain access to the dataset. [Socrata has documentation](#) on how to generate an app token unique to you (and to reset it or revoke it if necessary) and how to include the app token in your requests.

## Relevant Law, Rule, and Regulation

[M-17-06, Policies for Federal Agency Public Websites and Digital Services - November 8, 2016](#)

[M-13-13 — Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies - May 9, 2013](#)

[M-10-06, Open Government Directive - December 8, 2009](#)

## Data Validation Tools

- [Goodtables.py](#) - "a framework to validate tabular data. It can check the structure of your data (e.g. all rows have the same number of columns), and its contents (e.g. all dates are valid)."

## List of Socrata Tutorials That I've Found Helpful

- [Featured Content For The Data Catalog](#) - How to update categories with featured content items.
- [Using The Platform](#) - How to open up and work with data sets in lots of tools (Tableau, R, Plotly, PowerBI, etc.).
- [Data Visualization](#) - How to work with data sets specifically for visualization.
- [Locating The API Docs for a Dataset](#) - How to work with the Socrata API for each dataset.

- [Access Socrata Data Using OData](#) - Specifically through the Open Data Protocol API standard.
- [Metadata API](#) - How to read the data about data sets via an API.
- [Socrata "Primer" A Dataset's Landing Page](#) - How to navigate around each data set's landing page.
- [Web Interface for dataset upload](#) - How to upload data sets manually through the web.
- [Updating datasets using working copies](#) - Use temporary, private versions of data sets to edit and update, review and clear, and then publish to make visible to data set users.
- [Creating a Filtered View](#) - How to create filters and sorts on data sets.
- [Utah Department of Transportation Socrata Help Resources](#) - collection of helpful tutorials put together by Utah for their Socrata open data portal