data and visuals via a wiki. However, few people had graphs that could be used and shared, and there were no standards or consistency around the data and the visuals. Realizing the wiki model wasn't working, Lillian brought the process of data aggregation, curation, and visual presentation in-house, and invested in the technology to help automate some of it. Wiki New Zealand became Figure.NZ, and efforts were reoriented toward providing services to those wanting to open their data and present it visually.

Here's how it works. Figure.NZ sources data from other organizations, including corporations, public repositories, government departments, and academics. Figure.NZ imports and extracts that data, and then validates and standardizes it—all with a strong eye on what will be best for users. They then make the data available in a series of standardized forms, both human- and machine-readable, with rich metadata about the sources, the licenses, and data types. Figure.NZ has a chart-designing tool that makes simple bar, line, and area graphs from any data source. The graphs are posted to the Figure.NZ website, and they can also be exported in a variety of formats for print or online use. Figure.NZ makes its data and graphs available using the Attribution (CC BY) license. This allows others to reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute Figure.NZ data and graphs as long as they give attribution to the original source and to Figure.NZ.

Lillian characterizes the initial decision to use Creative Commons as naively fortunate. It was first recommended to her by a colleague. Lillian spent time looking at what Creative Commons offered and thought it looked good, was clear, and made common sense. It was easy to use and easy for others to understand. Over time, she's come to realize just how fortunate and important that decision turned out to be. New Zealand's government has an open-access and licensing framework called NZGOAL, which provides guidance for agencies when they release copyrighted and noncopyrighted work and material.[2] It aims to standardize the licensing of works with government copyright and how they can be reused, and it does this with Creative Commons licenses. As a result, 98 percent of all government-agency data is Creative Commons licensed, fitting in nicely with Figure.NZ's decision.

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Lillian thinks current ideas of what a business is are relatively new, only a hundred years old or so. She's convinced that twenty years from now, we will see new and different models for business. Figure.NZ is set up as a nonprofit charity. It is purpose-driven but also strives to pay people well and thinks like a business. Lillian sees the charity-nonprofit status as an essential element for the mission and purpose of Figure.NZ. She believes Wikipedia would not work if it were for profit, and similarly, Figure.NZ's nonprofit status assures people who have data and people who want to use it that they can rely on Figure.NZ's motives. People see them as a trusted wrangler and source.

Although Figure.NZ is a social enterprise that openly licenses their data and graphs for everyone to use for free, they have taken care not to be perceived as a free service all around the table. Lillian believes hundreds of millions of dollars are spent by the government and organizations to collect data. However, very little money is spent on taking that data and making it accessible, understandable, and useful for decision making. Government uses some of the data for policy, but Lillian believes that it is underutilized and the potential value is much larger. Figure.NZ is focused on solving that problem. They believe a portion of money allocated to collecting data should go into making sure that data is useful and generates value. If the government wants citizens to understand why certain decisions are being made and to be more aware about what the government is doing, why not transform the data it collects into easily understood visuals? It could even become a way for a government or any organization to differentiate, market, and brand itself.