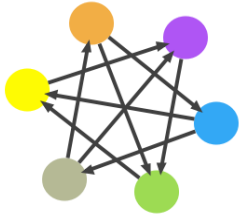


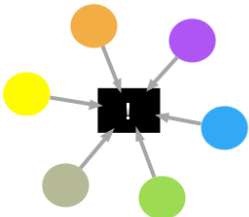
The Data Commons Cooperative

Connecting the Cooperative Economy



Share information

The Data Commons Cooperative is made up of organizations building the cooperative and solidarity economy. The organizations believe in sharing information with each other - membership lists, measurements, opportunities - to give greater strength and resilience to all participating. Much of the information shared is also openly shared with the public.



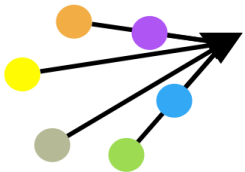
Create tools

Data Commons members are creating tools to most effectively use shared information. These include common directories, maps, and databases as well as membership engagement platforms, marketplaces, and tools to embed shared information around the internet. Tools are licensed as open source, available for anyone to use and improve.



Empower members

Sharing helps the memberships of our organizations make the most of the information concentrated. Whether they be businesses, consumers, professionals, or activists, information is easier to access, relationships are easier to build, and presence within the movement is easier to maintain.



Build the movement

The Data Commons Cooperative membership is made up of mission-driven organizations that are organizing toward a more just and equitable economy. The movement has passion and reason, but it needs infrastructure. The shared tools created by the cooperative will make sharing, communicating, and empowering the movement easier, by working together.

More information online at datacommons.find.coop

Founding members



COOPERATIVE
DEVELOPMENT
INSTITUTE
The Northeast Center
for Cooperative Business



How can I get the cooperatives in my community to talk to each other? And talk to cooperatives further afield?

How can I get the word out about all the great economic initiatives in my region? How can I find out what is happening elsewhere?

How can I lessen the never-ending work of keeping my database up-to-date?

How can I keep in touch with my membership more efficiently?



CooperationWorks!
THE COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT NETWORK



COOPERATIVE
DEVELOPMENT
INSTITUTE



NASCO
students of cooperation



Grassroots
Economic
Organizing

Vision: Connecting the Cooperative Economy

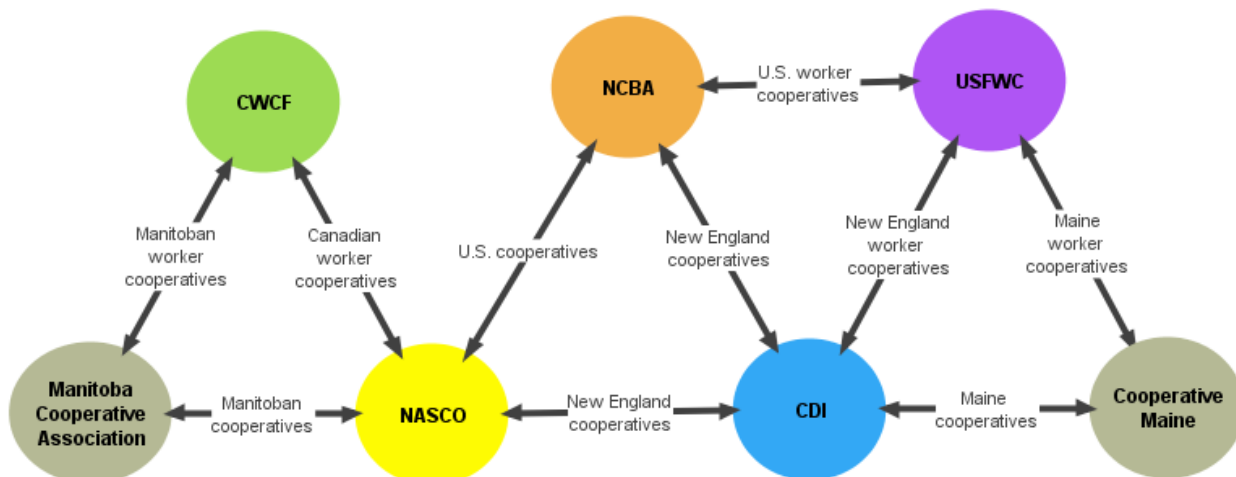
People everywhere have been organizing a more ethical economy, but they work in relative isolation, fragmented by geography, sector, and even organizational form.

Many organizations collect information about a small piece of these efforts. In every situation, there is another organization for which that information overlaps. In every case there is an opportunity to share that will strengthen all the organizations participating.

Sharing requires effort, it requires trust, and it requires infrastructure. The Data Commons is a cooperative of organizations that are sharing – sharing the costs of this effort, trusting each other with their information, and building infrastructure to make sharing is easy.

Members of the Data Commons Cooperative are principled economic organizations that want it to be easy to share with each other, and with the world, in the movement for a more ethical economy.

Examples of information overlap



Where is the nearest...
Credit union?
Cooperative grocery?
Printing cooperative?
Agricultural co-op?

How can I put my
purchasing power
toward locally
rooted, principled
economic initiatives?

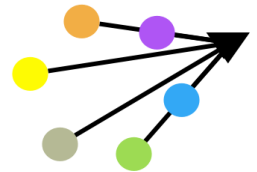
How big is the
solidarity
economy? Is
it significant?

How can
consumers find
my ethical
business?

What is the Data Commons Cooperative?

Uniting the movements

The Data Commons Cooperative is a movement-building organization, owned and controlled by cooperative development centers, federations, solidarity economy groups, and others, who want to maintain robust, accurate, useful platforms for sharing information. The cooperative gathers information and creates tools that make it easy for members to access each others' data, and broadcast information to the public.



Pooling our information will enable the movement's size and economic significance to be measured. Contributing information to the Data Commons will allow us to amplify the scope and impact of our activities.

An accurate, current, durable database

The cooperative's first major initiative is to create a decentralized database of entities working toward an ethical economy. This database is a commons, a shared resource that members contribute to, glean from, and help maintain. Updates made to the Data Commons at any time, by any organization, are sent throughout the cooperative, creating the most accurate and up-to-date directory the movement has seen. Contributions to the directory are decentralized with a wiki interface. You can make the updates, or email to your constituency to request they update their listing, decreasing your labor time.

find.coop

built by you and the
Data Commons Cooperative

A Directory of the Cooperative & Solidarity Economy of North America

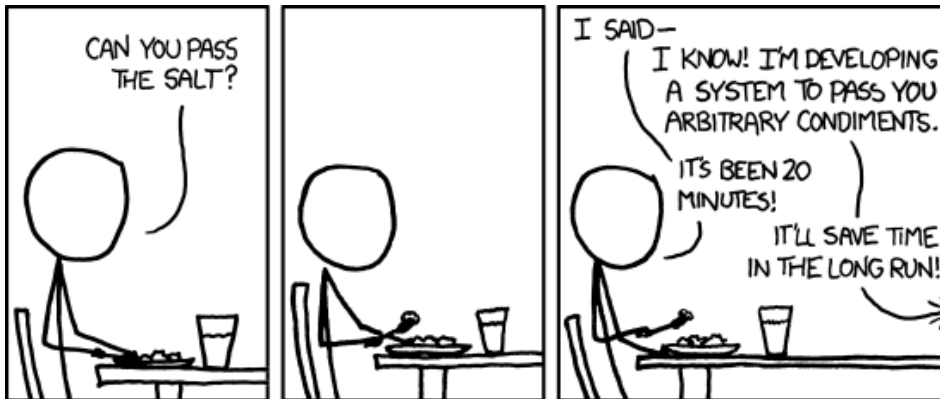
[Login](#) | [Report problem](#)

Displaying **all 982** organizations
[View as list](#)



Planning for resilience

Movement directories have a weakness: despite great effort to create them, they steadily lose freshness and data quality. GEO's *An Economy of Hope: Annotated national directory of worker co-ops, democratic ESOPs, sustainable enterprises, support organizations & resources*, was an impressive collection when printed in 2000, but 10 years later is closer to movement ephemera than resource. A similar thing could be said of the U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives' 2008 Democracy at Work Directory – by 2011, half of the bookstores listed were no longer operating. Even the University of Wisconsin's Research into the Economic Impact of Cooperative's data from 2009 is beginning to lose data quality. A lot has happened since 2009. Right now, there is a tremendous amount of mapping and directory-making – we want to make sure that energy is not made irrelevant in a few years. Unlike other directories, the Data Commons will be resilient, always improving in accuracy as the movement grows and changes. Contributors may come and go, but there is resilience in the shared task of maintaining the information. However, this means that it will be more complex to build.



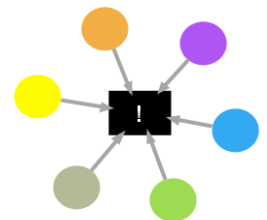
Building for long term resilience can look excessive in the short term - but it is still a good idea.

From <http://xkcd.com/974>

Sharing also means reduced labor redundancy and reduced labor costs. The Data Commons can send automatic reminders to your constituency to update their information, and alert you if they do – a simple way to keep up-to-date with changes in your membership. Alerts can be send to you if new initiatives in your area are added, no matter who adds them, allowing you to reach out quickly to integrate them into your efforts.

Member-directed tools and services

Being a Data Commons Cooperative member means directing the development of the most useful tools for your organization and for the movement. Tools and services will expand with the growth of the membership. In addition to several active online directories at www.find.coop, the founding members have chosen four key projects to develop in 2012, detailed later in this document.



Database management and software development are challenging, and sometimes prohibitively expensive activities for small organizations working toward social change. The critical mass of regional organizations that have begun to pursue cooperatives and principled economic initiatives, and new-found cross sector alliances make it a unique moment to work together. The cooperative cannot flourish without a broad membership, but can reduce costs and make an impact if we work together.

How Does It Work?

Sharing data

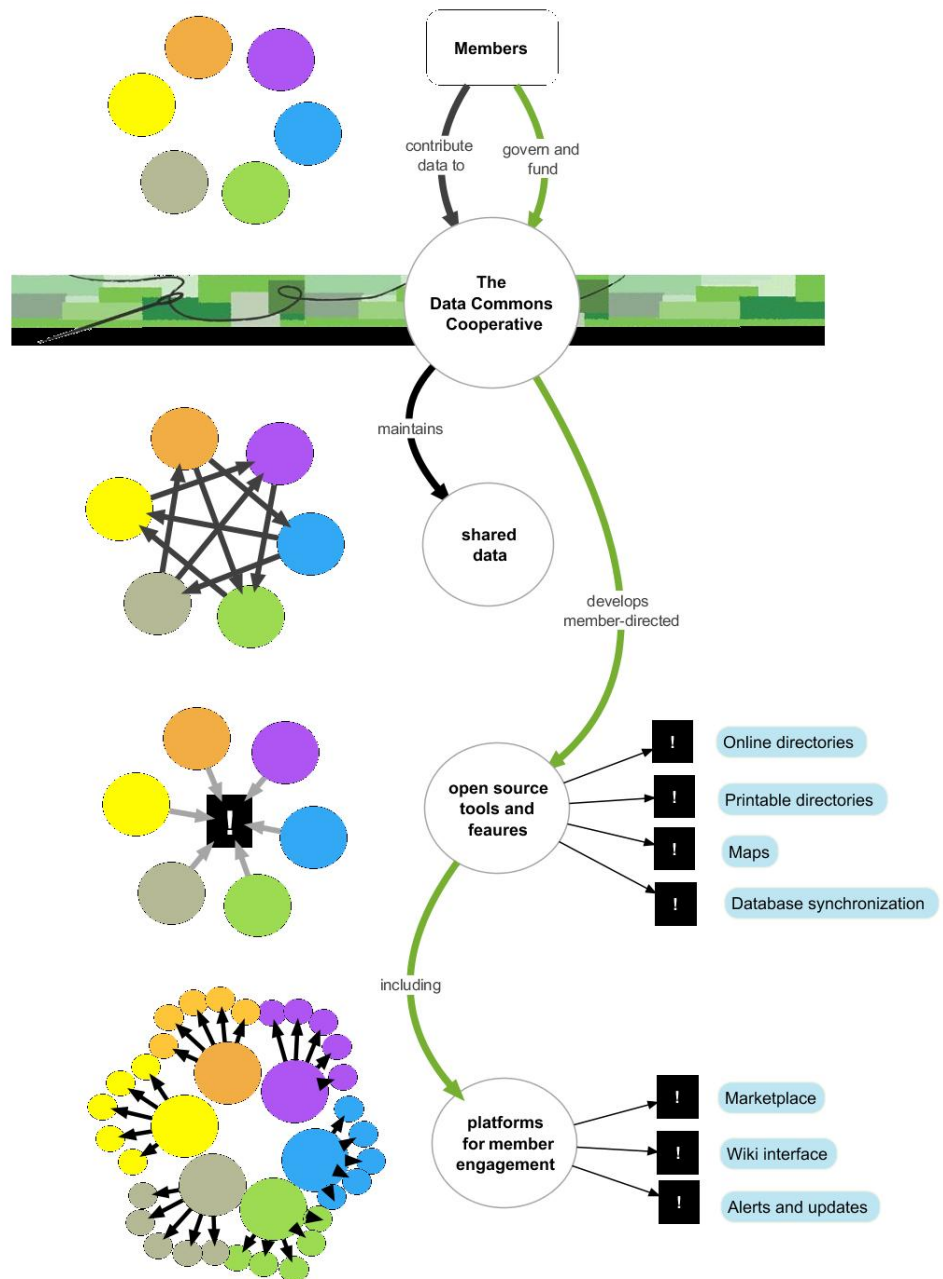
Members of the Data Commons contribute their organizational listings to the cooperative in whatever format they are using – spreadsheets, database programs, mailing lists. The cooperative then formats it for the commons, assessing the data for both technical and legal concerns, and gets clarity on what the member wants shared and what they do not. Then infrastructure is set up for the data to be shared among the membership and, if the member desires, for the data to be given an open license and made public.

Creating tools for the movement and the memberships

The Commons takes all the contributed data and generates useful features for the movement and the public – directories, guides, maps, marketplaces – whatever the cooperative has built. In addition, it alerts individual businesses by email that they are being listed and offers them a chance to update their information. Any time an individual organization makes an update, the umbrella organization for their region or sector is alerted. Members can also opt in to receive updates from any new listing in their region or sector, or from any other member or source. These tools are made open source for other groups to develop and improve.

Governance

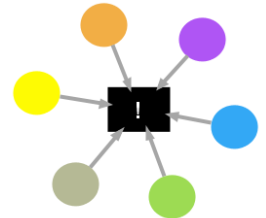
Members govern the maintenance of the Commons, oversee administrative staff and contracted programmers, and direct the development of new tools and services. This means deciding on and funding the most useful tools for the movement and for the members and their mission.



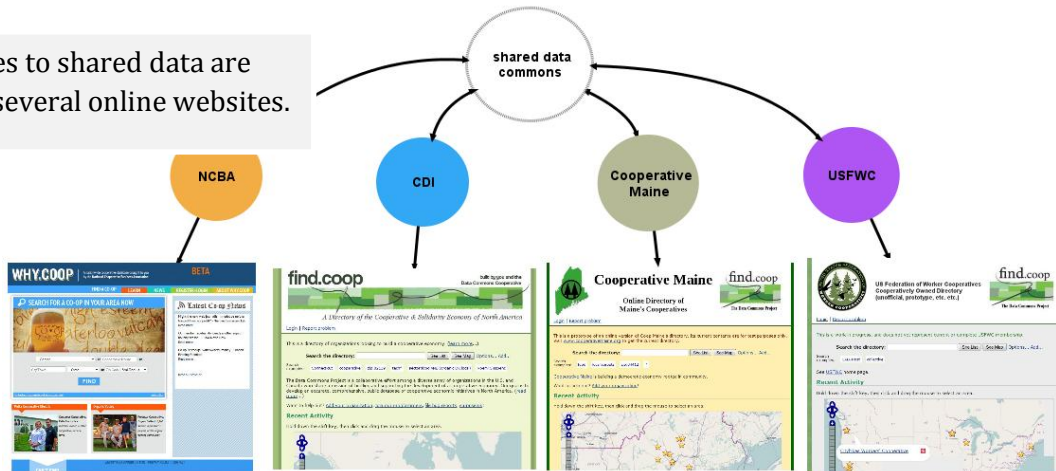
Feature development planned for 2012

1) www.find.coop and other online directories

Overview: Continue to import new data sets to our network of online directories. Improve the intake system with better automated email contact to members and their constituency. Establish regional volunteer maintainers and create subdomains for their grassroots organizations. Build regular imports and merges from available online sources.



Changes to shared data are fed to several online websites.



Details for each organization are available, including a description and web links.

Any registered user can add or edit entries in a wiki format.

Search results can be exported to create regional, sectoral or other directories.

name	descriptio	created_b	updated_i	phone	fax	email
Amalgamated Bank of New York				212-620-81	212-924-4	gpac@c
Credit Union Of New York				212-354-1252		
New York Energy Group				212-302-1;	212-827-0	kaufma
Amalgamated Bank of New York				212-620-81	212-924-4775	
Energy Co Energy Supplier in New York St				716-842-11	716-819-0	info@e
CBS New York Employee Federal Credit U				212-975-4807		
Hip Sing New York Federal Credit Union				212-732-2343		
NBC New York Employee Federal Credit L				212-664-3411		
New York Lee Federal Credit Union				212-233-2768		
New York SPI Employees Federal Credit U				212-781-3900		
New York State Employees Credit Union				212-233-4570		
New York State Psych Federal Credit Unic				212-960-2200		
Port Authority New York Credit Union				212-775-1344		
New York Times Employees Credit Union				212-354-0351		
New York Times Employees Federal Cred				212-499-2000		

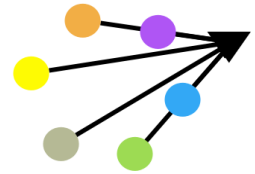
Feature development planned for 2012 (continued)

2) Opt-in email subscription system

Problem: Decentralized email lists pose an obstacle to movement building

Solution: DCC members' list subscribers can opt in to other members' lists.

Overview: DCC members may consider themselves to be part of the same movement. They may share values, goals, and even territories. Therefore, a subscriber to one members' email list has an increased likelihood of being interested in another member's list. However, there is not an easy way for email list subscriptions to be shared. This feature makes it as easy as possible for individuals to be offered all DCC email lists so they may choose the relevant subscriptions and join them with minimal effort. This will increase all DCC members' constituencies and help grow the movement for cooperatives and principled economic initiatives.



The screenshot displays the 'Data Commons Cooperative' website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: 'about', 'find.coop', 'join', 'contact', and 'donate'. The main heading is 'Join Our Members' Email Lists'. Below this, a text block invites users to subscribe to members' email lists. A list of member organizations follows, each with a checkbox and a brief description. A red arrow points to the checkbox for 'The National Cooperative Business Association (U.S.)'. At the bottom of the list, there is a button labeled 'Subscribe to all checked organizations'. To the right of the main content, there is a section titled 'Our Members' which lists the same organizations with their logos. At the bottom right, there is a section titled 'Updates' with a small logo and text: 'datacommons RT @Coopoly: Co-opoly is 100% made in the USA, made with recycled goods or from sustainable'.

Data Commons Cooperative

about find.coop join contact donate

Join Our Members' Email Lists

Interested in cooperatives and principled economic initiatives? Subscribe to our members' email lists to receive updates about your interests, or across the nation.

- ☐ **The National Cooperative Business Association (U.S.)**
The National Cooperative Business Association is the nation's oldest and largest national membership association representing cooperatives of all types and in all industries. We are democratically organized and operate according to internationally recognized cooperative principles.
- ☐ **The United States Federation of Worker Cooperatives**
The United States Federation of Worker Cooperatives is a national grassroots membership organization of and for worker cooperatives, democratic workplaces, and organizations that support the growth and development of worker cooperatives. We were founded in 2004, the result of several years of organizing on the part of worker cooperatives and regional groups from around the country.
- ☐ **The Canadian Worker Co-op Federation**
The Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation is a national, bilingual grassroots membership organization of and for worker cooperatives, related types of co-operatives (multi-stakeholder co-ops and worker-shareholder co-ops), and organizations that support the growth and development of worker cooperatives.
- ☐ **Cooperative Development Institute**
Cooperative Development Institute (CDI) is the Northeast's center for cooperative business education, training and technical assistance. CDI's mission is to build a cooperative economy through the creation and development of successful cooperative enterprises and networks in diverse communities in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Maine, Rhode Island and New York.
- ☐ **North American Students of Cooperation**
The North American Students of Cooperation (NASCO) Family [of associations] organizes and educates affordable group equity co-ops and their members for the purpose of promoting a community oriented cooperative movement.
- ☐ **Grassroots Economic Organizing**
Grassroots Economic Organizing (GEO) is a decentralized collective of educators, researchers and grassroots activists working to promote an economy based on democratic participation, worker and community ownership, social and economic justice, and ecological sustainability—a "solidarity economy"—through grassroots journalism, organizing support, cross-sector networking and movement-building and the publication of educational and organizational resources.

Subscribe to all checked organizations

share this

Our Members

We are a cooperative of data-sharing organizations that promote the cooperative economy. Our current, founding members are:

- The National Cooperative Business Association
- The United States Federation of Worker Cooperatives
- North American Students of Cooperation
- NASCO
- The Canadian Worker Co-op Federation
- Cooperative Development Institute
- Grassroots Economic Organizing

Updates

datacommons
RT @Coopoly:
Co-opoly is 100%
made in the USA, made
with recycled goods or
from sustainable

Feature development planned for 2012

3) Embeddable dynamic search results

Problem: DCC members can not benefit from Data Commons search results without directing visitors to leave their website to find.coop.

Solution: Have find.coop generate embeddable code to embed search results in other sites.

Overview: Many data-sharing members do not have the capacity to serve dynamic results from the Data Commons for display on their website. For instance, their list of regional or sector' organizations is hand-edited for online display, or not available. They may contribute data in a spreadsheet to the Data Commons and not host their own version online. However, they may want visitors to their website to benefit from the data commons search features. One solution to this problem is the creation of a branded subdomain like maine.find.coop. For DCC members who do not want a full subdomain, embeddable code is the best solution.

The embedded results can be shown in different ways. One site may want to embed a *map* of results, while other sites may want to embed a *text-based list* of links that are relevant to an article. One DCC member may want to show *nearby organizations*, while another may want to show *relevant sources for good or services*.

Examples of what embedded maps could look like



Feature development planned for 2012

4) Marketplace for cooperative and principled trade

Problems: cooperatives that wish to buy from other cooperatives do not have an easy way to find and procure supplies from them. Individuals that wish to buy from cooperatives do not have an easy way to do so.



Solution: create a marketplace that offers easy access to goods and services from the organizations included in the DCC members' constituencies.

Overview: Cooperatives would benefit from unified, value-added market presence and an easy portal for purchasing. There has been some co-branding exploration under "Marketing the Cooperative Advantage" efforts, and some precedent online marketplaces in [The Working World's Worker's Bazaar](#) that follows the Fair Trade movement's emphasis on transparency and direct purchasing.

Examples of an ethical online marketplace

THE WORKING WORLD

Español English

CERES

Price: US\$44.98

Cooperative receives	US\$22.39
Real middle man cost	7.84
Fund contribution	5.60
Argentine V.A.T. and U.S. duties	9.15

Where does your money go?

Cooperative Products

Onda buttoned shirt	Black Blouse
Rayas buttoned shirt	Polka-dot Blouse
Amarillo buttoned shirt	Amarillo short-sleeved buttoned shirt
Black buttoned shirt	White Blouse
Azul buttoned shirt	Verde buttoned shirt

Ceres
Rayas buttoned shirt
Item #: CP0AD005
Size Chart
(The Rayas comes only in long sleeve)

The women of Ceres have been making elegant, durable shirts for the transit workers of Buenos Aires for decades. Leveraging their experience, they are now making upscale shirts truly as good as any you find at name brand stores and selling them to the world under their own brand.

These new shirts are the product of expert craftswomen, and it shows in every stitch. Shirts of this quality cost more than twice as much at any store. We've received hundreds of emails praising the shirts and never a complaint. Please check the sizing chart for fit, and when you're sure which is for you, enjoy the fruits of democratic work and world class quality.

Based on their original transit worker shirt, the women of Ceres have created this limited edition striped version for casual wear. Made now of high quality 100% cotton material for comfort and elegance.

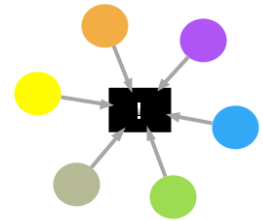
Select Shirt size ▼

Quantity: 1 **Add to Basket**

Feature development planned for 2012

5) Upstream merging

Problem: As organizations use data provided to them by others, they improve and correct it for themselves, but those improvements are unlikely to make it back to the original source (“upstream”).



Solution: Create a tool to compare data and merge changes regardless of format, software, or source, and provide services for members to make the process smooth and easy.

Overview: Data-Sharing Organizations often provide listings of contact information to others (e.g. for event planning) who then make useful corrections and updates for themselves, but merging those updates back “upstream” is burdensome. The data has usually been subjected to exporting, importing, and filtering, so it’s not obvious how to identify and send improvements back. The problem is not just that improvements made by the “downstream” user don’t benefit the “upstream” provider. The downstream users themselves are also disadvantaged in the future when they may need to spend time repeating the same improvements.

The Data Commons Cooperative is developing an open source tool called *Coopy* to solve this problem. Coopy allows “downstream” users to easily see what changes they made and produce a summary report to send upstream. Upstream providers can then use Coopy to review and selectively merge those changes effortlessly.

We believe that making this kind of data-sharing easy is how you can really make the cooperative advantage pay off. There are all kinds of data that can be usefully shared. Find.coop (feature 1) is an example of shared directory information. Currently it is able to propagate directory listing changes throughout the different affiliated sites, but only because they use the same underlying database. This requires fairly tight collaboration among Data-Sharing Organizations. Coopy’s upstream merging supports much looser collaboration, with independent data storage, diverse choices of formats and systems, and no requirement for public sharing.

@	bridge	designer	length
	Brooklyn	J. A. Roebling	1595
+++	Manhattan	G. Lindenthal	1470
->	Williamsburg	D. Duck->L. L. Buck	1600
	Queensborough	Palmer & Hornbostel	1182
	Triborough	O. H. Ammann	1380,383
...
	Throgs Neck	O. H. Ammann	1800
	George Washington	O. H. Ammann	3500
---	Spamspan	S. Spamington	10000

An example of a Coopy change summary



Data Licensing

The Data Commons offers several ways for members to ensure their data sets are legally re-distributable, while privacy is protected.

Legal overview

A fact, like a telephone number, is not legally considered to have an author that can restrict its sharing. No one has “created” a fact or gained rights by increasing its value. However, a collection of facts, like a list of telephone numbers in a telephone book, *is* legally protected – it does have an author, that author has added value, and the author has rights.

The Data Commons is set up to redistribute lists of information as broadly as its membership desires, and in many formats – online, printed directories, etc. In order to do this legally, the members contributing their organizational listings must grant the Data Commons the *legal right* to redistribute them. In turn, the members will also want to make sure their constituency has opted-in, and given them the *moral right* to broadcast facts about them.

Licenses

The Data Commons requests that members contributing data sets choose to license their data so that rights are clear. The most restrictive choice would be not to allow any redistribution – in which case the Cooperative would not have any benefit and would ignore the data.

Open / Public Domain: The least restrictive choice would be to allow anyone to see the data, so long as they also make it freely available to others. This license would have transitive “share alike” requirements.

Cooperative Commons: A less restrictive choice would be to allow any “approved” organization to see the data, so long as they only passed it along to other approved organizations. The default list of approved organizations is the membership of the Data Commons Cooperative.

Different parts of your data may be licensed differently. For instance, you may license addresses as *open*, while licensing email addresses to only be shared within the *cooperative commons*.

Copyrighted material

The Data Commons is not currently engaging legally with the redistribution of pictures, descriptions, logos, or other copyrightable material.

Guardianship of your data

Aside from licenses, members will also have guardianship over the entries they contribute. They will be notified when these change, and be able to communicate about these entries to their constituency through the Data Commons tools and services.

Membership Rights and Responsibilities

Members in the Data Commons Cooperative must

- Demonstrate a commitment to the movement for a cooperative economy
- Maintain a data set that furthers the goals of the movement
- Pursue the clear licensing of their data set for legal and effective sharing
- Select an individual to act as a contact person to the cooperative
- Be voted in by the cooperative's Board of Directors, and
- Contribute annual dues as specified by the Board

The 2012 annual dues are set at

- 0.1% of a member's previous year's budgeted expenses
- rounded down to the nearest \$50
- with a minimum threshold of \$100

For instance:

Previous year's expense budget	Annual dues
\$0 to \$149,999	\$100
\$150,000 to \$199,999	\$150
\$200,000 to \$249,999	\$200
\$250,000 to \$299,999	\$250
\$300,000 to \$349,999	\$300
\$350,000 to \$399,999	\$350

...and so on. Dues may be waived by the board in some circumstances.

Meeting these responsibilities entitles members to

- Access pooled data that is licensed as Members Only (in addition to data licensed as Open)
- Receive basic implementation of Data Commons tools and services for your organization
- Elect the cooperative's board and govern the direction of new software development