Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Data Portal?

The Data Portal is an online application for data exchange between DRCOG and its members that makes data collection and distribution easier for everyone.

The site is log in only to accommodate sharing data that may be restricted, sensitive, confidential, or otherwise not suitable for public distribution. It also provides a forum for discussion and feedback between member staff and DRCOG regarding the data that we share.

The Data Portal is the primary way to provide data to DRCOG when a data request is made. It is also how DRCOG will provide data to its members in the event that the data is not public domain.

How is the Data Portal different from the Regional Data Catalog?

The Regional Data Catalog is a publicly accessible site where data is freely distributed.

The Data Portal is a restricted, login-only site. It is designed to be used by DRCOG members and is accessible by invitation only. The Data Portal is used to gather local data, some of which may be unsuitable for public distribution, but which may be used for internal DRCOG work. Some of the data shared through the Data Portal will be compiled into regional datasets, and if approved by contributing members, will be shared through the Regional Data Catalog.

What is an organization?

An organization is simply a way to group content and users by a common theme. In this case, the organizations correspond directly to jurisdictions. Each organization will have an administrator who will manage the editors and members for their jurisdictions. While users have the ability to follow and comment on any organization's page, they can only manage content within their own organizations.

Can an organization have more than one admin?

Yes, an organization can have more than one admin. DRCOG recommends having at least 2 admin users per organization.

What are the user roles and how do they differ?

Privilege Matrix Action	SysAdmin	Organization Admin	Editor	Member
Assign users to an organization and define their role (privilege level)	X	X		
Define/Change any user's role (privilege level)	X			
Define/Change a user's role (privilege level) within their organization	X	X		
Delete any user	X			
Delete a user from their organization	X	X		
See comments on all datasets	X			
See comments on all datasets that the user is subscribed to	X	X	X	X
See all organization-level comments	X*			
See organization-level comments for their organization	X*	X*		
Upload a dataset to any organization	X			
Upload a dataset to their organization	X	X	X	
Upload a resource to any dataset	X			
Upload a resource to their dataset	X	X	X	
Edit any existing datasets	X			
Edit their existing datasets	X	X	X	
Delete any dataset (moves to archive of deleted objects)	X			
Delete any dataset (permanently)	X			
Delete their dataset (moves to archive of deleted objects)	X	X	X	
View public data	X	X	X	X
View their private data	X	X	X	X
View any private data	X			
Download public data	X	X	X	X
Download their private data	X	X	X	X
Download any private data	X			
See number of users for any organization	X			
See number of users for their organization	X	X		
Note: For an admin, "their dataset" includes any data (public or private) added to their organization, even if the data was added by a different user.				
Note: For an editor, "their dataset" includes any data that they uploaded.				

What is the dashboard? 🏠 / Dashboard

The dashboard is the first screen the user encounters after logging in. It contains a news feed showing all activities associated with items the user is following, datasets that the user owns, and organizations to which the user is an administrator for.

How is the News Feed different from the Activity Stream?

The News feed shows changes and activities for all items that a user is following, including datasets and organizations. The Activity Stream only shows the user's own activity. If the user is not following anything, these two lists will be the same.

Can I filter my activity stream and my news feed?

Yes. Users will be able to filter by what they follow.

What should I follow?

We recommend that users at minimum follow DRCOG. Additionally, users should follow any organization or datasets in which they have interest. **You have to subscribe to a thread to get comments, not just follow the dataset**

Can I add more than one user at a time?

No, you cannot add more than one person at a time. This is a limitation of the CKAN platform, which may be functionality added in future versions.

How do I comment on a dataset?

To make a comment on the site, you first need to create a Disqus account. Disqus is an independent comment tool and once you create an account, you can use it to comment on any internet site that uses Disqus, including the Data Portal. Detailed instructions on how to create an account are in the User Guide. Please take note of DRCOG's recommendations for the notification options, since this will govern when you receive emails related to comment activity.

What if I have comments that are more general and/or not related to just one dataset?

Leave them at the organizational level. Remember to have your admin comment on your own thread initially so you see all subsequent comments.

What data can I view and download?

Users can view all datasets in their organization.* They can also view all datasets that other users have marked as "Public" when uploading data (see the User Guide for more information on Visibility options). * The only exception is datasets that have been deleted. Deleted datasets can only be seen by the user that deleted them.

What is a "dataset" and what are its associated "resources"?

A dataset is a container for related resources. A resource should have a one-to-one relationship with a file. For example, if a user wanted to upload 2015 buildings information, the best practice would be to set it up as follows:

- Dataset name: Buildings2015
  - o Resource: Buildings2015.zip (containing the shapefile)
  - o Resource: Buildings2015Metadata.txt
  - o Resource: Buildings2015DataDictionary.xlsx

Notice that the jurisdiction name appears in the name of the dataset and each resource. This is a best practice that we recommend to ensure that all names are unique. If the name is not unique, the user may receive an error message and/or be unable to create the datasets and resources.

What can I download?

Users can download any content that they can view. To be able to view a dataset, the user must own it, be part of an organization that owns it, or the owner must have selected "Public" in the Visibility options when uploading the data.

What are tags?

Tags are keywords that users can label their data with to enable more efficient searching. The preferred format for tags is lower case.

What formats are supported?

CKAN supports many file formats. When you upload a dataset, CKAN will read the file extension and automatically populate the format type into metadata. Shapefiles and geodatabase data will need to be zipped prior to uploading. If a zipped file is uploaded to the Data Portal, the format needs to be changed to the appropriate file extension. Layer files should be included in your zipped file with the geodata.

What are the sharing options for my data?

When uploading resources to a dataset, users must make a selection for the "Visibility" and "License" associated with the data. There are two options for each and the combinations are explained in the matrix below.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">Visibility</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Private</td><td>Public</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">License</td><td>Do not share with public</td><td>The data can never be shared with the public. If it is compiled into a regional dataset, it is for internal DRCOG-use only. DRCOG is the only other entity besides the owner that can see the data on the Data Portal site.</td><td>The data can never be shared with the public. If it is compiled into a regional dataset, it is for internal DRCOG-use only. Other members of the site can see this data in their search results.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Share with Public</td><td>The data can be shared with the public after it has been compiled into a regional dataset by DRCOG. In its original form (as uploaded by the owner), it is only visible to DRCOG. Other members of the site do not have access to it.</td><td>The data can be shared with the public in its original form and/or after it has been compiled into a regional dataset by DRCOG. Other members of the site can see this data in their search results.</td></tr>
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Why can't I change the dataset license level after I add the dataset?

Once a dataset has been added, the license level cannot be changed by any users of an organization. If the license needs to change, you must contact DRCOG. This is setup so that DRCOG can be informed of changed sharing restrictions. Otherwise, we would not be aware of changes to your license requests.

How will DRCOG share private datasets with me?

In the event that DRCOG needs to share data with you that no other site member should see, DRCOG will add the datasets and resources to your organization and mark the information as Visibility = Private.

How do I deal with license/data agreements?

DRCOG will manage all license agreements. If DRCOG is signing an agreement instigated by a jurisdiction that is designed to cover all the datasets shared from that jurisdiction to DRCOG, DRCOG will sign the agreement and then upload it to the organization.

If a user needs to sign an agreement to receive restricted data from DRCOG, DRCOG will upload the agreement to the site after it has been signed and returned. These types of agreements will be stored together in the DRCOG organization.

All signed license agreements will be viewable to all members of the Data Portal site.

What if I want to set a disclaimer for all my organization's data?

If you would like to place a general disclaimer that covers all the data your organization makes available to other site members, your admin may place this information in your organization's "About" section.

How do I delete a dataset permanently?

Editors and administrators are allowed to delete datasets that they have created or that they own*. When this occurs, the dataset is no longer seen by anyone else on the site, but will still show up in the user's dataset list (/Users/[username], Dataset tab). These datasets will have a red, "Deleted" label after them.

Permanent deletion can only be done by a sysadmin at DRCOG. Every month, DRCOG will permanently delete all the files that users have temporarily deleted through the process outlined above.

*Administrators own all content in their organization. Editors own data they have created. Members do not own data.

What is a draft? Can I delete a draft?

A draft is an unfinished dataset that results from abandoning the upload process before it is complete. The only way to delete a draft is to open it and finish it by going through all three upload pages. Once the dataset has been created, users may delete it.

What are the advantages of uploading data to Open Colorado?/How does DRCOG work with Open Colorado?

We support Open Colorado's vision of making government data more accessible and easy-to-use and encourage DRCOG members to openly share their data with the public through this site. When a member uploads data to Open Colorado, DRCOG will automatically sync it with the Data Portal so the member will not have to upload shared data in more than one location.   If you would like to learn more about publishing data to Open Colorado, go to opencolorado.org/publishing-guide/.

Troubleshooting Guide

Can I change my username/Why do I get an error when I change my username?

Users can change their usernames by editing their settings. During this process, the site will claim there is an error and say the username cannot be changed, when in fact, the user's change will have taken affect. This is clearly a bug in the underlying CKAN software and DRCOG has a bug report logged with the CKAN programmers to get it fixed.