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W3C Data on the Web - Best Practices

The Data on the Web Best Practices Working Group has published its primary document which is now a Candidate Recommendation. The document provides Best Practices related to the publication and usage of data on the Web designed to help support a self-sustaining ecosystem. Data should be discoverable and understandable by humans and machines. Where data is used in some way, whether by the originator of the data or by an external party, such usage should also be discoverable and the efforts of the data publisher recognized. In short, following these Best Practices will facilitate interaction between publishers and consumers.

As a further aid, the Working Group has also published stable versions of its Data Quality and Dataset Usage vocabularies. Taken together, the three documents address the group's mission as stated in its charter:

- to develop the open data ecosystem, facilitating better communication between developers and publishers;
- to provide guidance to publishers that will improve consistency in the way data is managed, thus promoting the re-use of data;
- to foster trust in the data among developers, whatever technology they choose to use, increasing the potential for genuine innovation.

Finally, it's worth noting that the closely related Share-PSI project, co-funded by the European Commission, has concluded its work recently with the publication of a set of high level policy-related Best Practices and guides for the sharing of public sector information online. Although targeted at Europe, the advice, which is available in many languages and contexts, is likely to be applicable world wide.

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