Governments and knowledge sharing

Knowledge transfer is a key part of official development assistance and behavior change for sustainability, and many government programs revolve around conveying knowledge to the community.

Using open licenses for content is one important part of making that knowledge transfer effective. Governments often develop content, e.g. for sustainability programs, and if open licenses are used, this can be shared and collaboratively developed between them, and with other groups, for maximum impact.

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Governments and open content

Many governments around the world use open licenses. See Government use of CC licenses on the Creative Commons wiki for a detailed list. Some examples relevant to sustainability and development knowledge sharing are discussed below.

United States

The US federal government has large amounts of public domain content, as under US law no work by an officer of the federal government may be copyrighted. See US federal government websites and public domain. This can be searched using the Public Domain Search.

Australian governments

The Australian federal government is shifting to extensive use of open licensing, often the Creative Commons Attribution license (CC-by), starting around 2009. The Australian Bureau of Statistics and Geoscience Australia, for example, are now using CC-by as the default licence for their websites.

The Mashup Australia competition was held in 2009 to encourage creative use of government data.

The Victorian state government in Australia appears to be seriously considering Creative Commons licenses as the default for all its public sector information.
The Queensland state government in Australia is exploring open licenses - the Government Information Licensing Framework (GILF) website "makes it easy for people who use public sector information (PSI) to understand the rights of use associated with PSI material."

For more information on Creative Commons Licensing by Australian governments, see Creative Commons Australia, including the posts:

- Government 2.0 Taskforce gives CC a very big tick, 11 Jan 2010.

Policy

Appropedia can play the role of a Green development policy wiki, a place to share policies and open them to public analysis and creativity.