

Free access to law



Free-of-cost access to
LAWS
JUDGEMENTS
LEGAL SCHOLARSHIP

Open Access to Law or “Free Access to Law” is a movement that is affiliated both with open government data and with the open access movement, but predates both of them. It is concerned with **free-of-cost access to laws, policies, rules, gazettes, etc., as well as legal scholarship.**

CIS engaged in a partnership with LexUM (at the University of Montreal) and the Southern African Legal Information Institute in which we spearheaded the research on what works and doesn't work in terms of running such “legal information institutes” in four countries in Asia. We're now going to try to open up the Electronic Gazette of India (which contains the official record of all central government policies, notifications, etc.), as well as India's parliamentary processes, to ensure citizens can better understand what goes on in terms of law-making in Parliament.

Towards better governance



Government makes
its data public



Organizations provide
better research services



Better governance

While governmental transparency doesn't necessarily result in accountability, we can't have accountability without transparency. Open data acts like “right to information (RTI) on steroids”, requiring the government to proactively make more information publicly accessible on the web, and can also help private sector / NGOs help in providing better research, services and, ultimately, better governance.

CIS has produced a report on open government data in India with funding from the Transparency and Accountability Initiative. We submitted this research to the government when it was preparing the National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (India's 'open data' policy). We also wrote a chapter in a book on “Opening Government” on short-term, medium-term and long-term ambitions that any government should have to open up its data and the firm steps they can take towards that. We also participate in Datameet (the largest group around open data in India) and work with the government's data.gov.in initiative.



Innovation and creativity are fostered through openness and collaboration. The advent of the Internet radically defined what it means to be open and collaborative. The Internet itself is built upon open standards and free/libre/open source software.