



July 8, 2016

IRS makes Electronically Filed Form 990 Data Available to the Public Online

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE, NOT-FOR-PROFIT, TAX
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Previously, the IRS made only image files of Forms 990 available for the public. An interested party could request forms from the IRS in electronic or paper format.

In June, the IRS began to publish all of the electronically filed Forms 990 online in a machine-readable format using "Amazon Web Services." The public can access the data that is stored in Amazon's public cloud for free. All of the information is stored in XML language and is readable only by programs designed to do so. Users will be able to sort the data in any manner. All of the personal information identifying donors is removed from the datasets before being published in the cloud.

It was a big step for the IRS to finally make the information it already had available to the public. Only after a federal court ordered the IRS to disclose Form 990 data to the public in 2015 did the agency finally move forward with releasing the data. However, the information will not be that useful for most people, since it's in a machine-readable format. Websites like Guidestar and CharityNavigator will continue to be primary sources for the public to quickly and conveniently retrieve needed information about a nonprofit organization. The IRS still has an option for the public to order Forms 990 on its website on DVD or in paper.

Please [contact a member of your Schneider Downs team](#) if you have further questions regarding the topic and [visit the Our Thoughts On blog](#) for more articles pertaining to the not-for-profit industry.

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