



What we do



The Open Siddur Project is dedicated to providing the resources for crafting new siddurim, sharing siddur related content, and providing an innovative resource for studying the depth and breadth of Jewish liturgy and Jewish spiritual practice. We,

Collect and prepare texts (liturgies, translations, commentaries, etc.), illustrations, and other siddur-related content

- [Scanning](#) Public Domain works,
- [transcribing](#) those materials,
- [proofreading](#) them for accuracy,
- and [encoding](#) them in our open source database.

Develop software:

- [specifications](#) of the XML-based format in which we archive the project's texts,
- [transforms](#) to convert the XML-encoded documents into print- or display-ready formats,
- the [eXist](#)-based native XML database that contains the data,
- and the web-based [application infrastructure](#) used by developers and end users for editing, retrieving and remixing the texts we provide.

and Advocate sharing

- Advocate for sharing resources across the span of Jewish cultural and educational projects
- Educate content creators on the benefits of licensing their work with standard [free culture licenses](#)
- Request authors, scholars, and artists to [share](#) their work
- Model best practices in sharing through the design and licensing of work we produce

Through these efforts we work towards realizing our **project vision**:

The Open Siddur Project envisions Jewish spirituality as a shared and collaborative project that is rooted in the wisdom of our traditions and which finds expression through the evolving diversity of our communities and the intimate experiences of our individual relationships. Much like the *mishkan*, the traveling tent of meeting (or tabernacle) was the focal point for those creatively inspired Israelites to share their work, *???? ?????? ?????????? ????????, as their hearts were stirred* (Exodus 36:2), so too we see the Open Siddur Project as a kind of *???????*, a unification of holy *?????????????* (intentions) for those sharing their *?????????????* (innovations) in Jewish spiritual practice, in sacred liturgy, in meditations and exercises, and in understanding through translations and commentary. In an age when our *?????????? avodah* (intentional practice) is expressed



by communities and individuals in a multiplicity of ways, it behooves us to take our *avodah* seriously, respect and reflect this diversity, and provide the means for crafting newly designed *Siddurim* accordingly. The Open Siddur Project is a community, space, and licensing framework for sharing those designs and enrich our individual and communal *avodah* with each other's creativity and insight.

The technology for engaging in a regular Jewish spiritual practice, like *davvening* for instance, only requires one to have an open heart, or the desire to have an open heart. No siddur is really necessary. And yet, a technology for accessing a set arrangement of techniques, formulations, exercises, and meditations can be very helpful for practitioners both adept and novice. The novel innovation that swept the Jewish world in the 19th century was the popular adoption of the *Siddur*, a bound reference book containing not only the established sequence of liturgy used by a *hazzan* leading communal prayer, but also many other useful arrangements for Jewish spiritual practice alone or at home. The great variety of extant siddurim is testament to the diversity of Jewish communal traditions. Until now, it was extremely difficult to create one's own siddur, collecting an arrangement reflecting an individual's own evolving engagement in Jewish spirituality. By converting Public Domain print resources and newly composed contemporary works to digital resources encoded in standard open formats, we can create a powerful means by which individuals and communities take ownership of their practice and make meaning through direct engagement with the ingredients of Jewish spiritual resources. The scope of this digitization is immense: we seek to digitize every manuscript witnessing a formulation of a prayer and variations in arrangements and selection representing every liturgical custom or *nusa*.

The Open Siddur Project is thus an open source and free culture project. We provide a framework for liturgists, translators, commentators, and others to grant explicit permission to anyone to adapt and modify their work for their use, or to simply incorporate it into a newly crafted siddur. Our first effort is in architecting a [free](#), online kitchen for users to prepare *siddurim* and other high quality Jewish reference works (such as *haggadot* and *bentchers*) to be printed out, shared online, or accessed via e-readers. We say a kitchen, since we are making available the ingredients, recipes, and arrangements which can be freely modified by anyone producing a reference work very similar to a cookbook.

In another sense, the resource we're developing might be called a collaborative publishing platform: collaborative like a wiki but designed with the ultimate goal of generating print media. Online, the platform will provide a space for individual users to select from, author, and share all the components of a siddur including prayers, translations, commentaries, art, and layout templates for incorporation in new, custom designed *siddurim*. Alternately, the platform could be used as a novel educational tool for the study of Jewish liturgy.