

# The Business Owner's Guide to Data Licensing

How licensing value is determined, what buyers need, and how to get started without becoming a data expert.

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## Key takeaways

- Start with one coherent collection, rather than a whole archive.
- Rights review, buyer fit and clear commercial terms guide the licensing process.
- You can retain ownership while licensing specifically agreed uses.

## 1. Start with the work you already do

Your business creates records because it needs to operate: plans, spreadsheets, job histories, reports, procedures, photos and footage. Those records sometimes contain something another organization cannot easily recreate: examples of how real work unfolds.

Consider a construction issue documented from the initial question through an approved response and final inspection, or a production run that connects job settings, rejected units and corrective actions. The value is in the context: the task, the evidence and the documented result.

The first task is to identify one coherent collection. There is no need to export your entire archive or send customer information to get started.

## 2. What licensing means

A license grants defined permission to use material. With Aegis, your company retains ownership and authorizes specific uses through a written agreement. Evaluation access and model training are defined separately.

Important terms include who may use the material, for what purpose, for how long, whether the permission is exclusive, and what happens to source copies and trained models after the agreement ends. A right to end future supply is different from a promise to remove information from an already trained model.

### 3. What AI buyers need

There is documented interest in proprietary data. OpenAI's 2023 partnership announcement described interest in nonpublic collections across several formats [1]. Shutterstock's 2023 announcement described a license covering image, video and music libraries with associated metadata [2]. Neither announcement establishes a price for an ordinary business's records.

Aegis prepares business data for AI training and evaluation. We define the task it supports, organize the relevant records and evidence, and pursue buyers whose requirements match the collection.

### 4. What makes a collection worth exploring?

Look for material that answers a recognizable question. Can someone connect a task to the evidence, a decision and an outcome? Are the files readable? Are dates and units consistent? Does the collection show meaningful variation rather than hundreds of copies of the same form?

Useful records are often scattered across software and folders. Aegis organizes and prepares the agreed collection. Your team explains the records and identifies exclusions. We assess the usable material and its context, rather than relying on a universal minimum file count.

### 5. Possession is only the beginning of the rights review

A file on your server can include customer material, a vendor's work, a contractor's creation or personal information. Our review examines its origin, relevant agreements, privacy commitments and intended use. We document the authorized scope, exclusions and any permissions that need resolution.

The FTC has emphasized that AI companies must honor privacy and confidentiality promises [3]. For an owner, the practical takeaway is to explain existing obligations before sharing material. Removing names is not a substitute for reviewing permission, confidentiality and identification risks.

### 6. How the Aegis arrangement works

Start by describing your business and its records. We assess the collection and agree the sample and permissions for further review. The written supplier agreement defines the material, Aegis's authority, permitted buyer uses and the revenue arrangement.

There is no supplier assessment fee or upfront preparation charge for agreed work. Aegis handles the preparation and buyer outreach and earns an agreed share of licensing proceeds. Your team provides the context and approved access needed to prepare the collection.

We prepare a scoped data product, approach suitable buyers and negotiate within the authority you grant. Buyer access follows the agreed approval process. The agreement specifies payment timing, receipt of buyer funds, reporting and any permitted deductions. No licensing deal means no supplier fee under this model.

## 7. How licensing value and your share are determined

The product determines the relevant commercial unit: usable cases, distinct clips, original tasks or a defined collection. Pricing reflects the useful material and the rights being licensed, rather than a universal rate per file, token or hour of footage.

Price reflects buyer requirements, usefulness, permitted uses, quality, scale, alternatives and commercial terms. The supplier agreement sets your share. Payment follows the completed license and its written provisions; recurring arrangements specify their own refresh and payment terms.

## 8. Questions to ask before signing

- What exact records and uses are authorized?
- Can samples be shown to buyers, and under what restrictions?
- Is the arrangement exclusive, and for how long?
- How are licensing proceeds and my share calculated?
- When is payment due, and what reporting will I receive?
- Who handles permissions gaps, claims and correction requests?
- What happens to delivered copies and existing buyer licenses if I end the relationship?

## 9. A sensible first step

Write a short description of one collection: the work it documents, approximate volume, date range, where it is kept and any known restrictions. Do not assemble a technical package or upload sensitive files. A free assessment should help determine whether a more detailed conversation is worthwhile.

## Sources & scope

Primary sources support the numbered factual statements. Product design, operating practice and commercial analysis reflect Aegis's approach.

1. OpenAI: Data Partnerships November 9, 2023
2. Shutterstock: Expanded six-year agreement with OpenAI July 11, 2023
3. FTC: Uphold your privacy and confidentiality commitments January 9, 2024

Sources reviewed October 3, 2026. Historical sources describe the agreements and guidance at their publication dates. Aegis assesses each collection using its own scope, permissions and commercial terms.

## Source links

OpenAI: Data Partnerships

<https://openai.com/index/data-partnerships/>

Shutterstock: Expanded six-year agreement with OpenAI

<https://investor.shutterstock.com/news-releases/news-release-details/shutterstock-expands-partnership-open-ai-signs-new-six-year>

FTC: Uphold your privacy and confidentiality commitments

<https://www.ftc.gov/policy/advocacy-research/tech-at-ftc/2024/01/ai-companies-uphold-your-privacy-confidentiality-commitments>