Introduction to Research Data Management and Open Science (aka Research)

S. Venkataraman, PhD
sv1uk@netscape.net

12th & 13th August 2024, Trieste

Agenda

	Day 1 (12th August)
14:00	Introduction to research data management (RDM)
15:00	Exercise: Practical session on RDM
15:30	Introduction to Open Science (Research)
16:00	**Break**
16:30	Introduction to Open Science (Research) (cont'd)
17:00	Exercise: Open Science
18:00	**End Day 1**
	Day 2 (13th August)
08:30	Introduction to DMPs
09:30	**End**

Learning outcomes

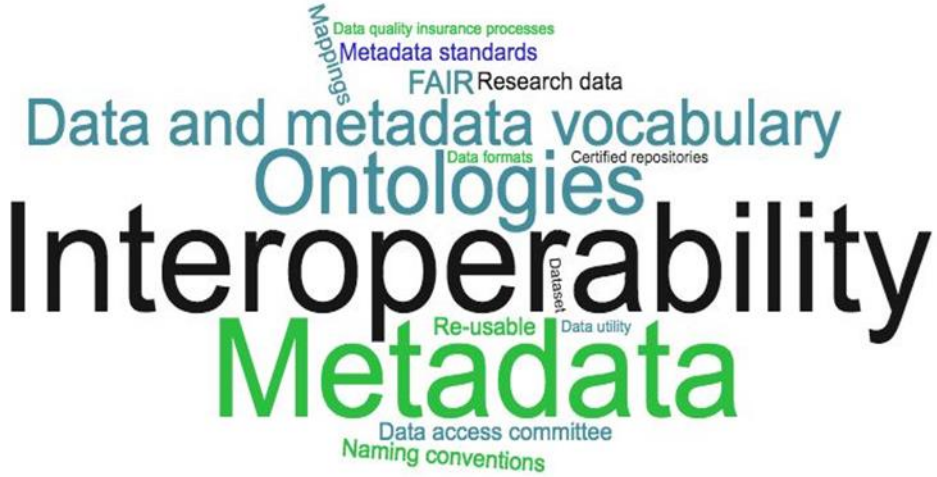
- Be familiar with the curation lifecycle.
- Understand the standardisation methods and principles available to add value to your data.
- Learn about resources to aid your workflows.
- Increase/encourage your level of openness.
- Learn about data management plans and the value in implementing them.

Language is a barrier...

Respondents mentioned 40 terms which were unclear to them in European Commission DMP:

"Researchers are not familiar with the following terms/phrases : Metadata, standards for metadata/data, ontologies, mapping with ontologies, interoperability, ... All the ICT jargon"

"With the help from Swedish National Data Service we could clarify many questions. Without this help we would not be able to finish the DMP."



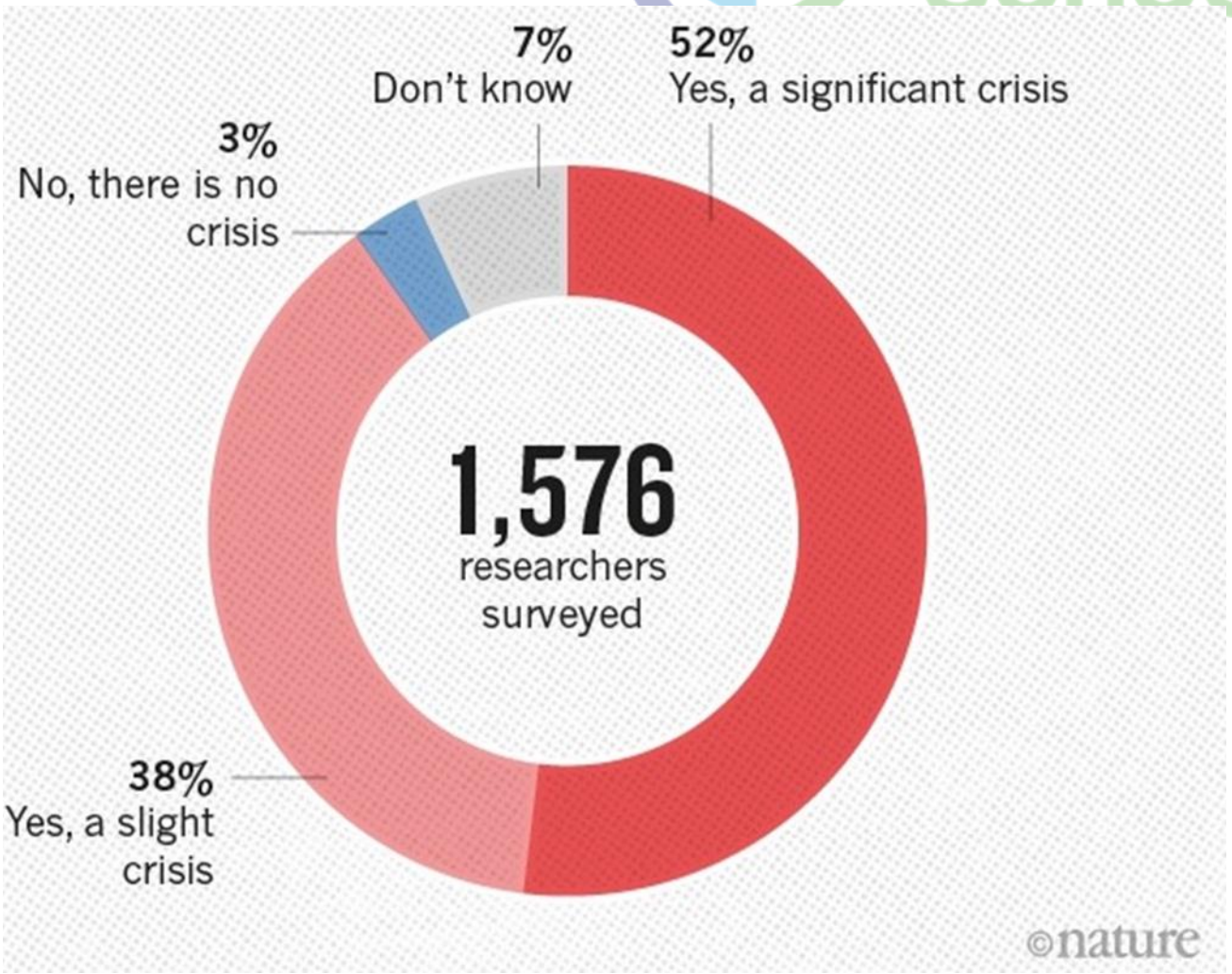
Groenveld et al. (2018). OpenAIRE and FAIR Data Expert Group survey about Horizon 2020 template for Data Management Plans http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1120245

Is there a reproducibility crisis?

Baker, M. “1,500 scientists lift the lid on reproducibility” *Nature* 533: 452-454 (2016).

http://www.nature.com/news/1-500-scientists-lift-the-lid-on-reproducibility-1.19970

doi:10.1038/533452a



The “data deluge”

- The volume of data is growing exponentially with >90% of all data in the world having been generated in just the last few years.
- **How to safeguard for the future?**
  - **Good RDM is essential!**
- **And what about the environmental impact??**

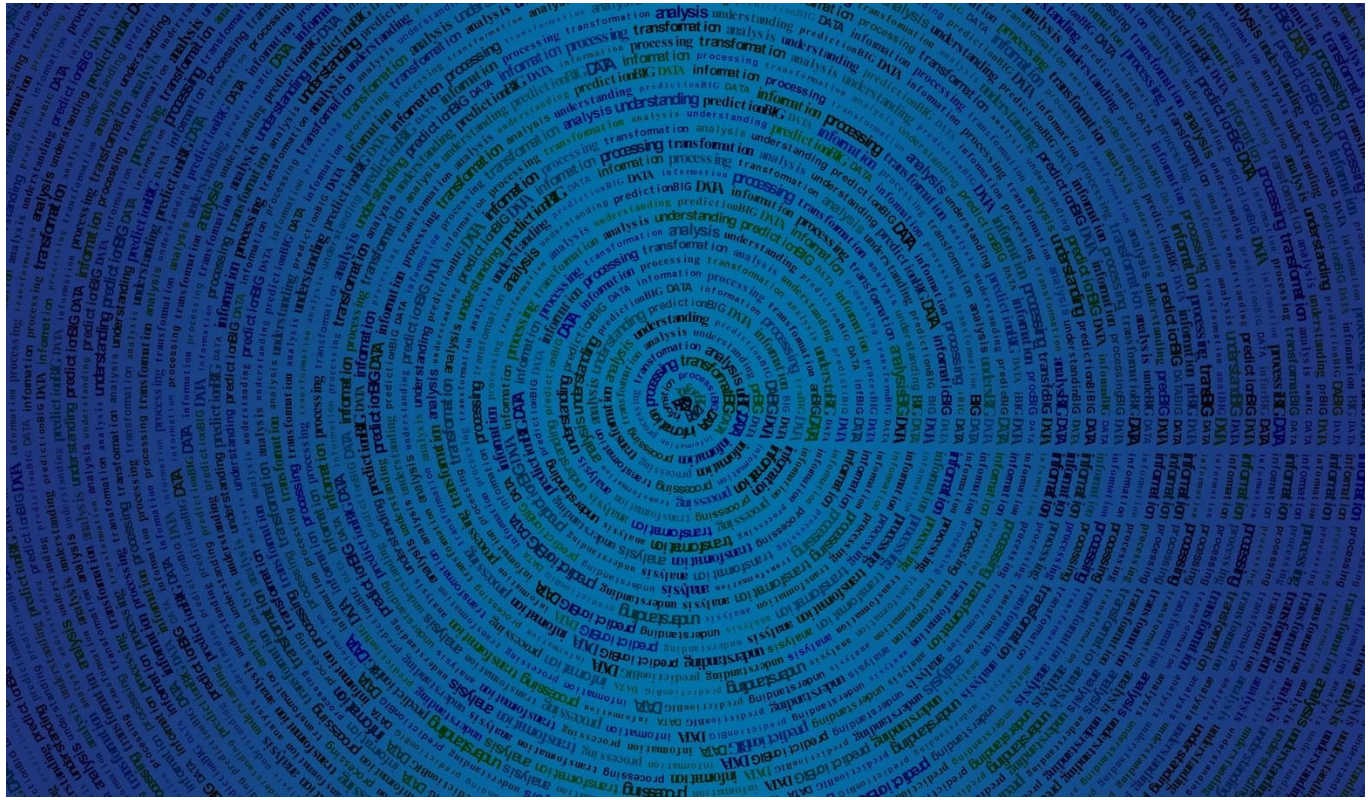


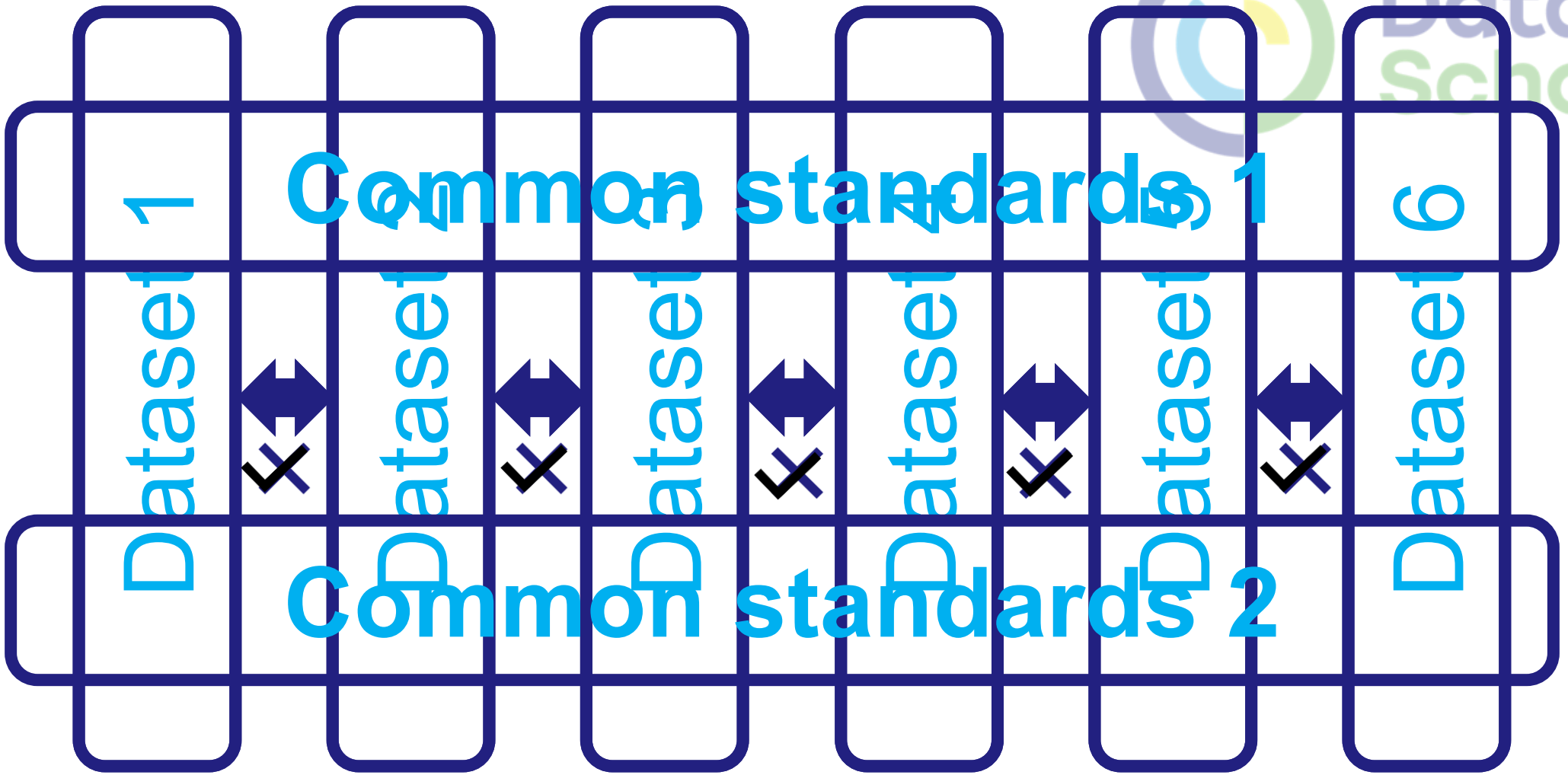
Image by Pete from Pixabay

The wider context

Set of goals outlined by the United Nations

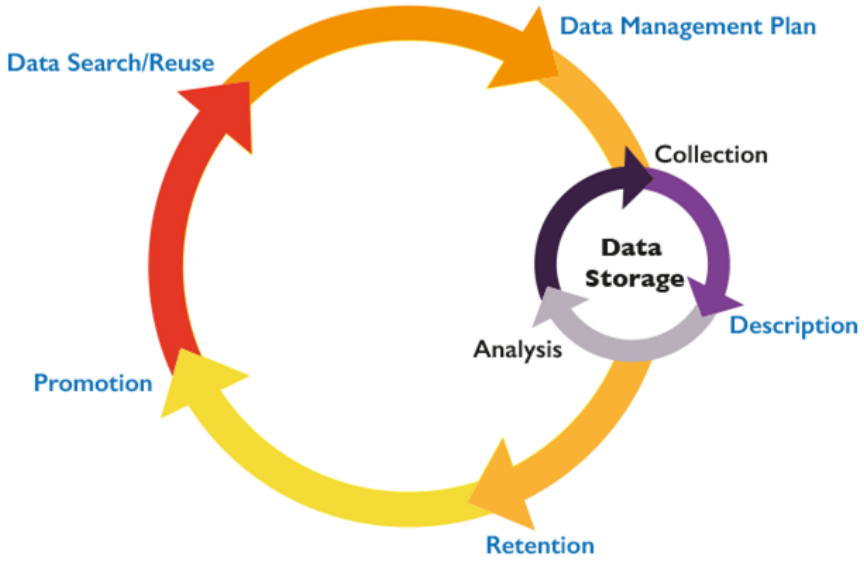
Data Schools

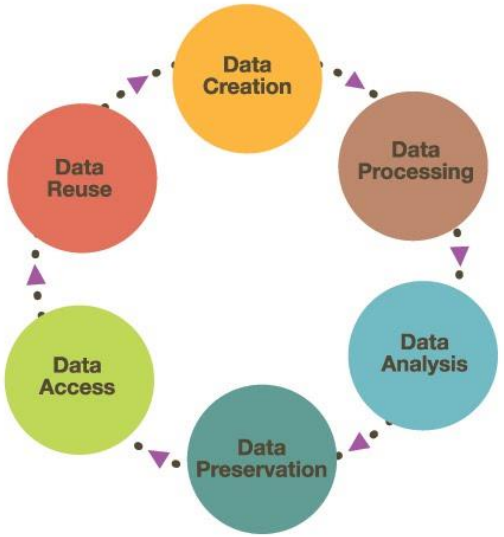
RDM & the Data Lifecycle

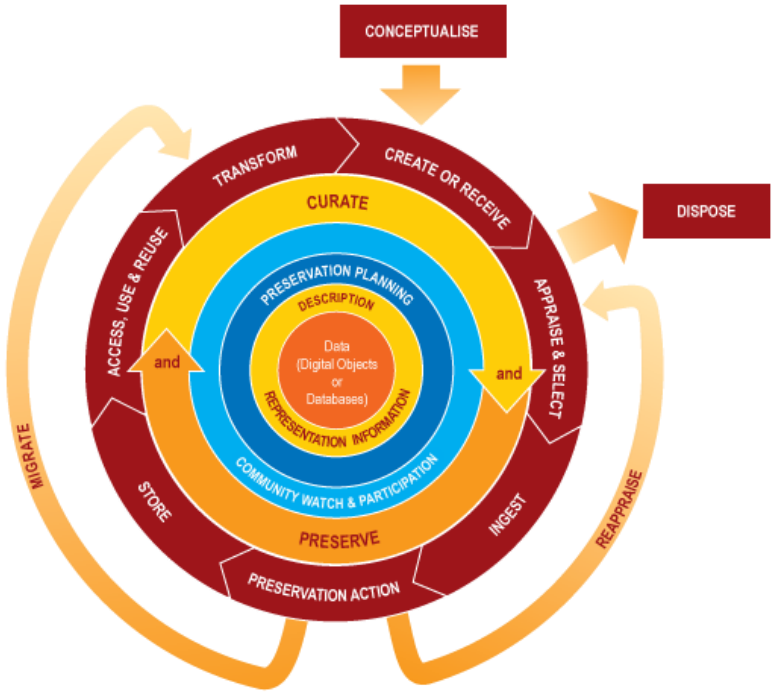

Common standards 1
Common standards 2
Dataset 1
Dataset 2
Dataset 3
Dataset 4
Dataset 5
Dataset 6

Data silos

RDM lifecycles







The curation lifecycle

What is Research Data Management?

"the active management and appraisal of data over the lifecycle of scholarly and scientific interest"

Data management is part of good research practice.

Data creation tips

- Ensure consent forms, licences and agreements don’t restrict opportunities to share data.
- Choose appropriate formats.
- Adopt a file naming convention.
- Create metadata and documentation as you go.

Ask for consent for data sharing

If not, data centres won't be able to accept the data – regardless of any conditions on the original grant.

SAMPLE CONSENT STATEMENT FOR QUANTITATIVE SURVEYS

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this survey.

The information provided by you in this questionnaire will be used for research purposes. It will not be used in any manner which would allow identification of your individual responses.

Anonymised research data will be archived at ..... in order to make them available to other researchers in line with current data sharing practices.

Choose appropriate file formats

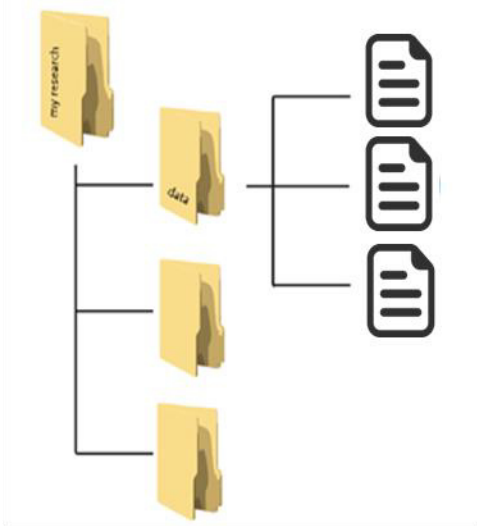
- Different formats are good for different things.
- *open*, *lossless* formats are more sustainable e.g. rtf, xml, tif, wav.
- proprietary and/or compressed formats are less preservable but are often in widespread use e.g. doc, jpg, mp3.
- One format for analysis then convert to a standard format.
- Data centres may suggest preferred formats for deposit.

Type of data	Recommended formats	Acceptable formats
Tabular data with extensive metadata variable labels, code labels, and defined missing values	SPSS portable format (.por) delimited text and command ('setup') file (SPSS, Stata, SAS, etc.) structured text or mark-up file of metadata information, e.g. DDI XML file	proprietary formats of statistical packages: SPSS (.sav), Stata (.dta), MS Access (.mdb/.accdb)
Tabular data with minimal metadata column headings, variable names	comma-separated values (.csv) tab-delimited file (.tab) delimited text with SQL data definition statements	delimited text (.txt) with characters not present in data used as delimiters widely-used formats: MS Excel (.xls/.xlsx), MS Access (.mdb/.accdb), dBase (.dbf), OpenDocument Spreadsheet (.ods)
Geospatial data vector and raster data	ESRI Shapefile (.shp, .shx, .dbf, .prj, .sbx, .sbn optional) geo-referenced TIFF (.tif, .tfw) CAD data (.dwg) tabular GIS attribute data Geography Markup Language (.gml)	ESRI Geodatabase format (.mdb) MapInfo Interchange Format (.mif) for vector data Keyhole Mark-up Language (.kml) Adobe Illustrator (.ai), CAD data (.dxf or .svg) binary formats of GIS and CAD packages
Textual data	Rich Text Format (.rtf) plain text, ASCII (.txt) eXtensible Mark-up Language (.xml) text according to an appropriate Document Type Definition (DTD) or schema	Hypertext Mark-up Language (.html) widely-used formats: MS Word (.doc/.docx) some software-specific formats: NUD*IST, NVivo and ATLAS.ti
Image data	TIFF 6.0 uncompressed (.tif)	JPEG (.jpeg, .jpg, .jp2) if original created in this format GIF (.gif) TIFF other versions (.tif, .tiff) RAW image format (.raw) Photoshop files (.psd) BMP (.bmp) PNG (.png) Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF/A, PDF) (.pdf)
Audio data	Free Lossless Audio Codec (FLAC) (.flac)	MPEG-1 Audio Layer 3 (.mp3) if original created in this format Audio Interchange File Format (.aif) Waveform Audio Format (.wav)
Video data	MPEG-4 (.mp4) OGG video (.ogv, .ogg) motion JPEG 2000 (.mj2)	AVCHD video (.avchd)
Documentation and scripts	Rich Text Format (.rtf) PDF/UA, PDF/A or PDF (.pdf) XHTML or HTML (.xhtml, .htm) OpenDocument Text (.odt)	plain text (.txt) widely-used formats: MS Word (.doc/.docx), MS Excel (.xls/.xlsx) XML marked-up text (.xml) according to an appropriate DTD or schema, e.g. XHMTL 1.0

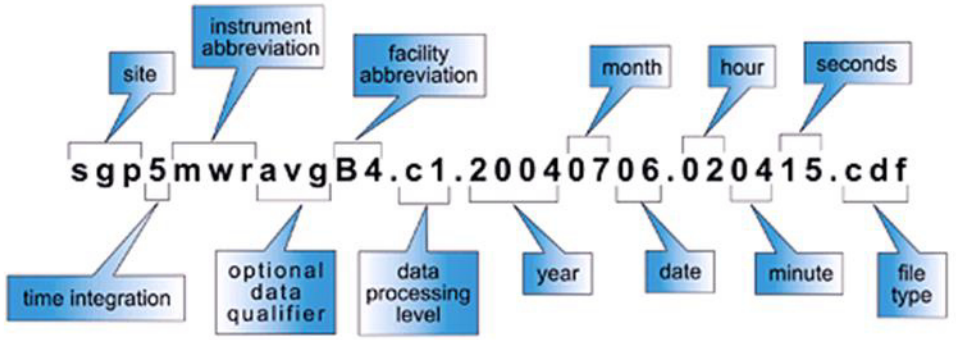
https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/manage-data/format/recommended-formats

How will you organise your data?

- Keep file and folder names short, but meaningful.
- Agree a method for versioning.
- Include dates in a set format e.g. YYYYMMDD.
- Avoid using non-alphanumeric characters in file names.
- Use hyphens or underscores not spaces e.g. day-sheet, day sheet.
- Order the elements in the most appropriate way to retrieve the record.



An example netCDF data file name is depicted below:



Example from ARM Climate Research Facility www.arm.gov/data/docs/plan

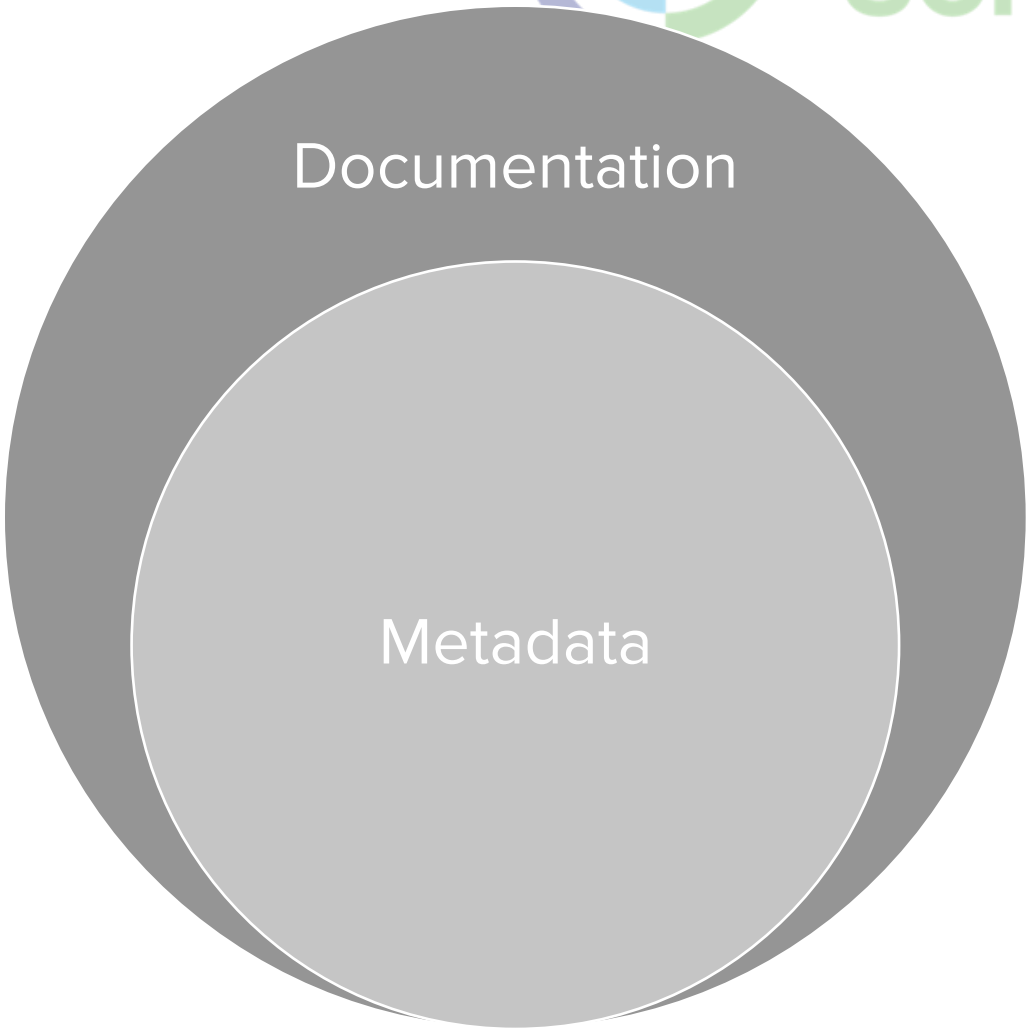
Documentation

Think about what is needed in order to evaluate, understand, and reuse the data.

- Why was the data created?
- Have you documented what you did and how?
- Did you develop code to run analyses? If so, this should be kept and shared too.
- Important to provide wider context for trust.

What are metadata?

- Metadata
  - Standardised
  - Structured
  - Machine and human readable
- Metadata helps to cite and disambiguate data.
- Documentation aids reuse.



Metadata standards

These can be general – such as Dublin Core

Or discipline specific

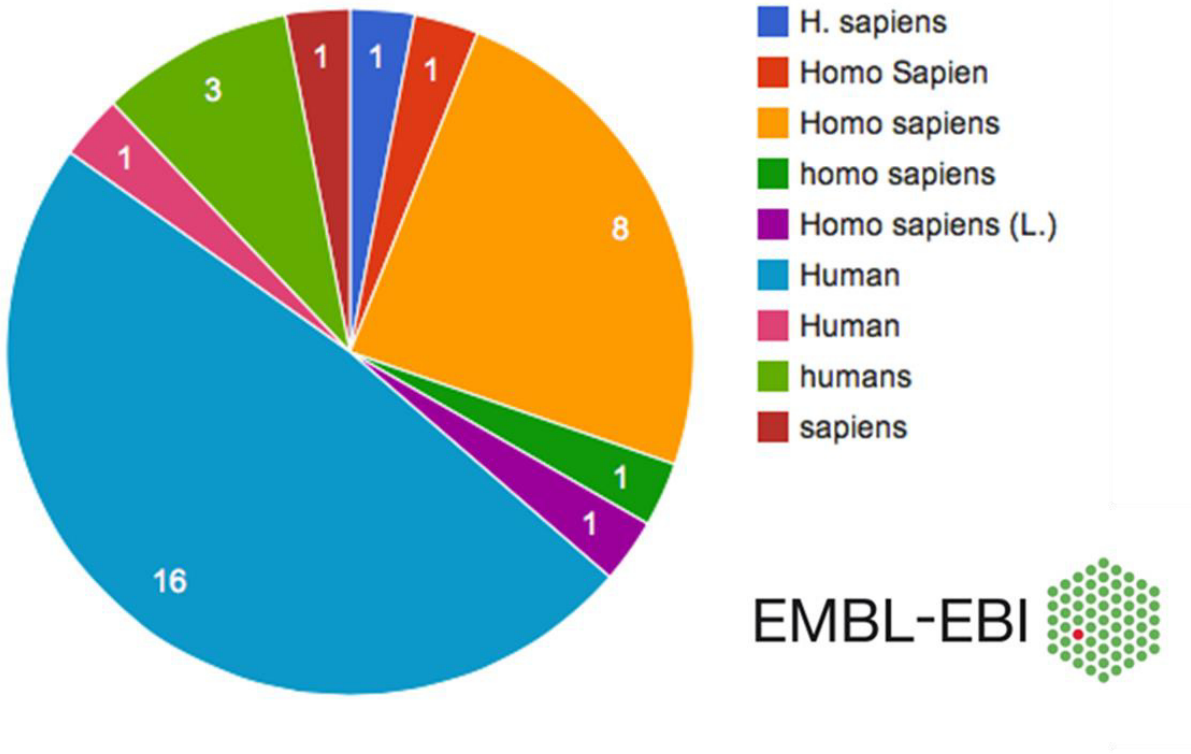
- Data Documentation Initiative (DDI) – social science
- Ecological Metadata Language (EML) - ecology
- Flexible Image Transport System (FITS) – astronomy

Search for standards in catalogues like:

- http://rd-alliance.github.io/metadata-directory/
- https://rdamsc.dcc.ac.uk/
- http://www.fairsharing.org

Controlled vocabularies

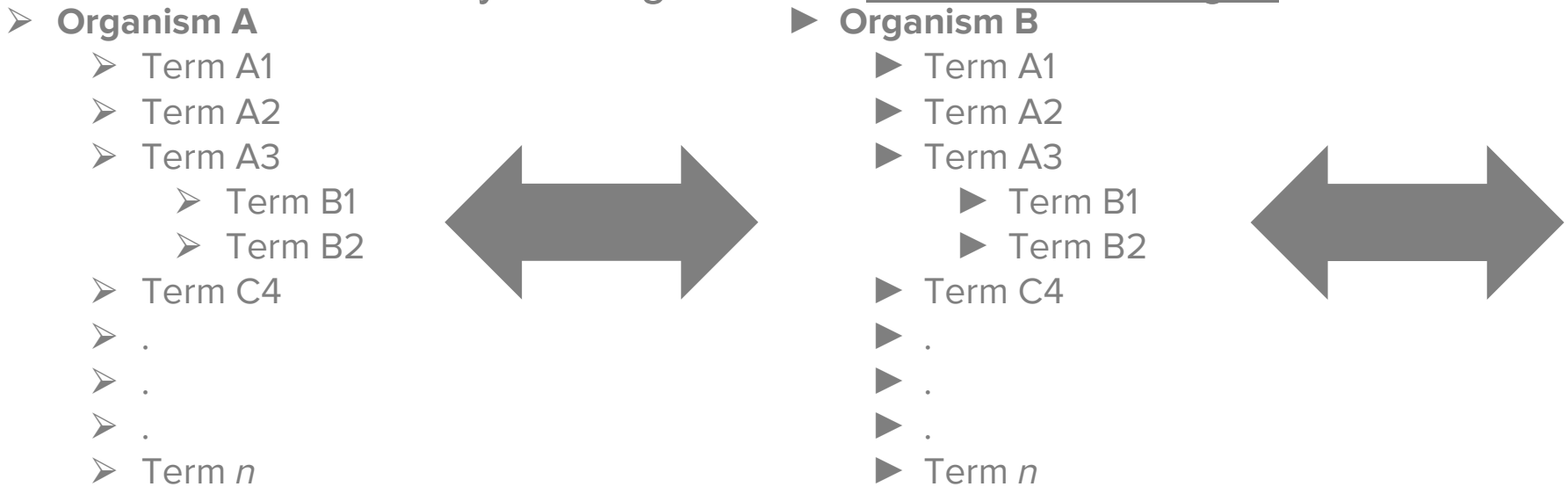
"MTBLS1: A metabolomic study of urinary changes in type 2 diabetes in……"



Example courtesy of Ken Haug, European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-EBI)

...and ontologies?

- e.g. SNOMED CT (clinical terms) or MeSH
- Defined terms + taxonomy.
- Useful for selecting keywords to tag datasets.
- You can find many ontologies in the BARTOC catalogue and elsewhere.



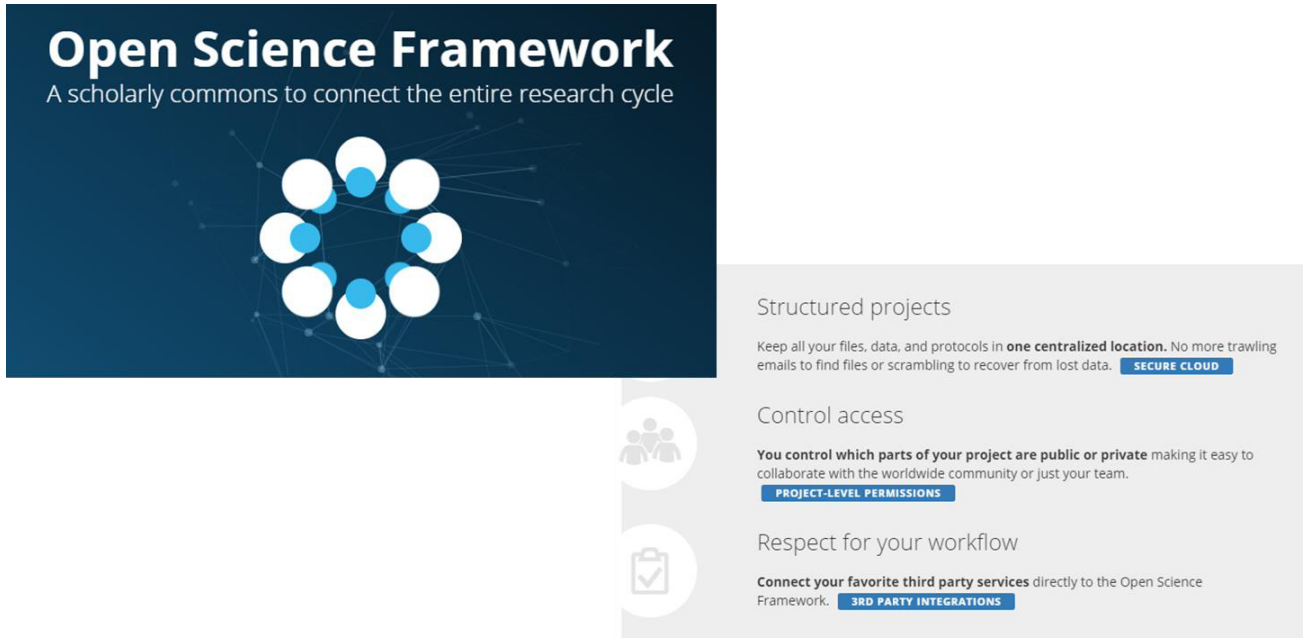
Where will you store the data?

- Your own device (laptop, flash drive, server etc.)
  - And if you lose it? Or it breaks?
- Departmental drives or university servers.
- “Cloud” storage.
- Do they care as much about your data?

The decision will be based on how sensitive your data are, how robust you need the storage to be, and who needs access to the data and when.

Collaborative platforms e.g. OSF

Open platform for sharing data in active phase with fellow researchers and others in secure environment.



https://osf.io

Third-party tools for collaboration

Dropbox, Google Drive, OneDrive and other cloud services

- Commercial
- Who owns your data?

Dropbox

ownCloud

- Open source product with Dropbox-like functionality.
- Used by many universities and service providers to offer ‘approved’ solution.

ownCloud

https://owncloud.org

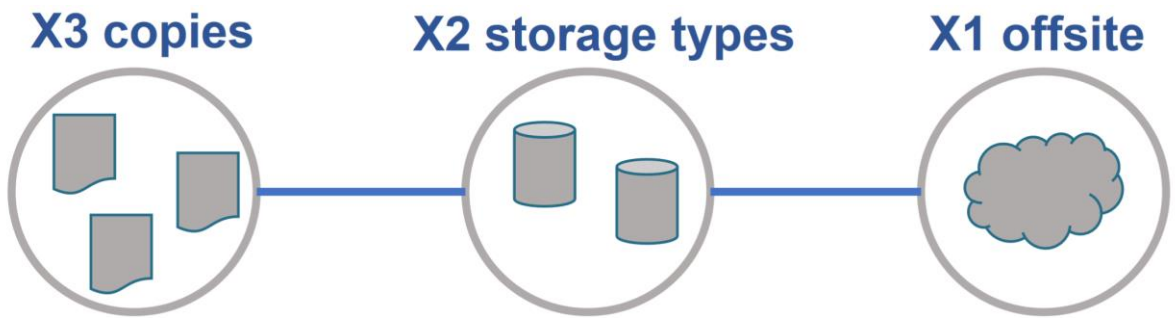
Backup and preservation – not the same thing!

Backups

- Used to take periodic snapshots of data in case the current version is destroyed or lost.
- Backups are copies of files stored for short or near-long-term.
- Often performed on a somewhat frequent schedule.

Archiving

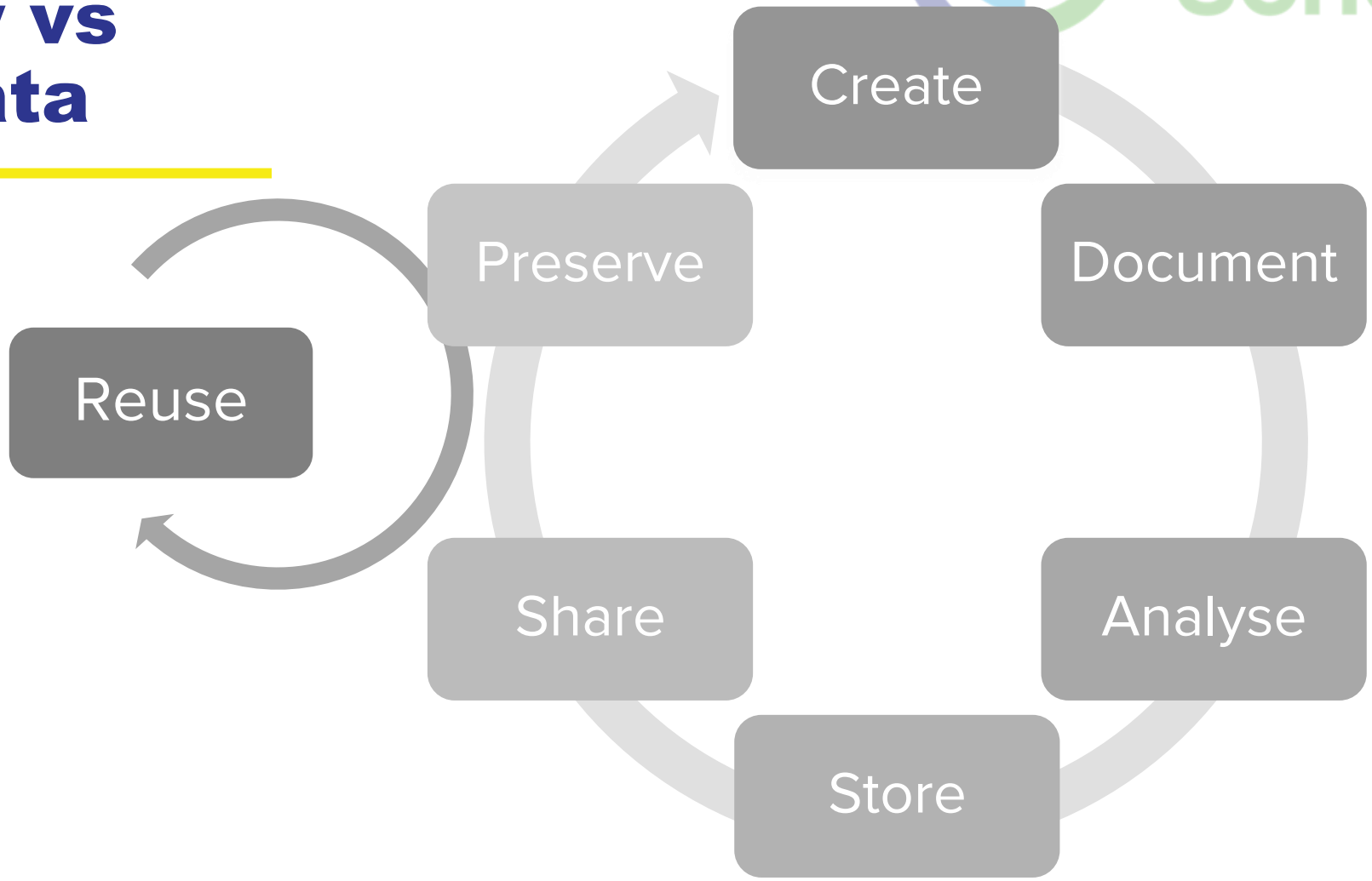
- Used to preserve data for historical reference or potentially during disasters.
- Archives are usually the final version, stored for long-term, and generally not copied over.
- Often performed at the end of a project or during major milestones.



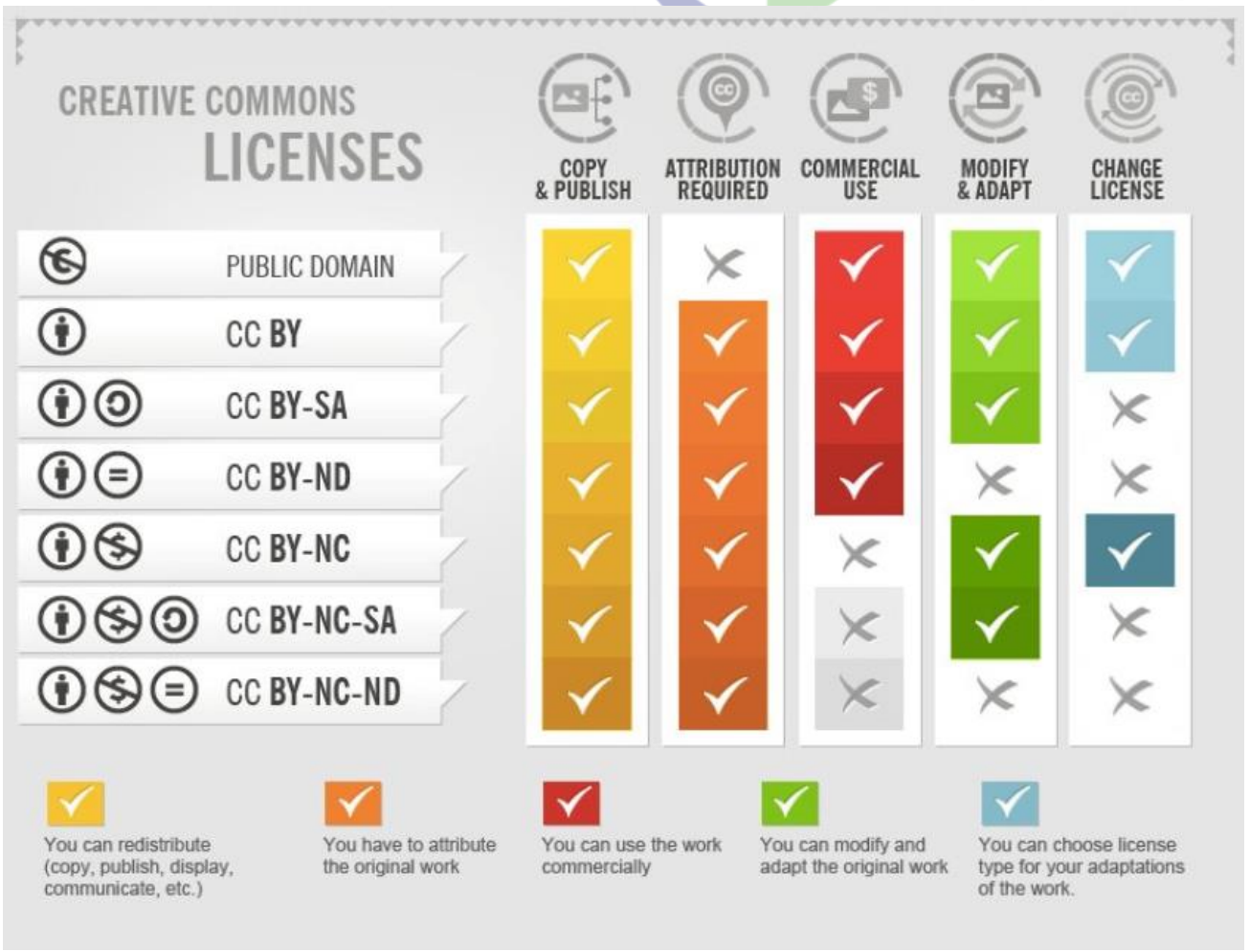
How will you allow others to use your data?

Apply licences to disambiguate reuse restrictions.

Secondary vs primary data



License research data openly

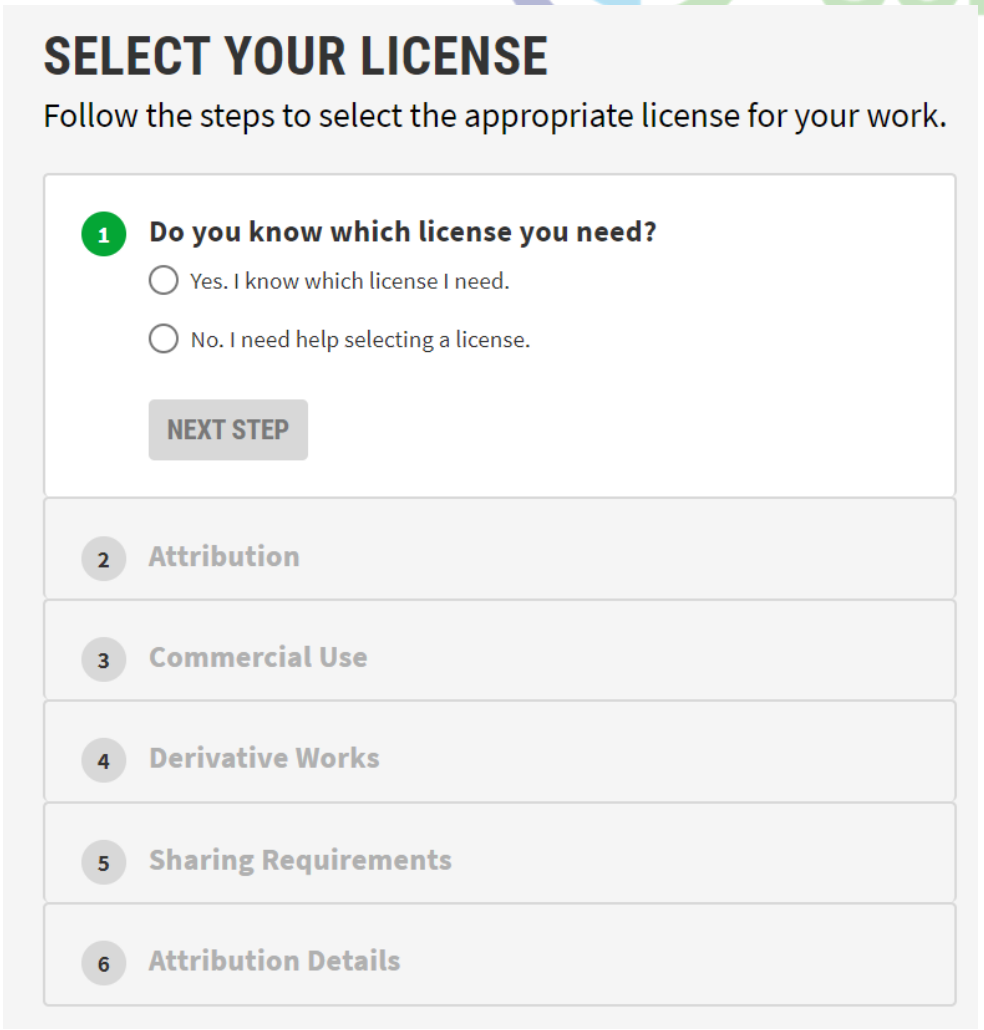


Part of How To Attribute Creative Commons Photos by Foter, licensed CC BY SA 3.0

Tools to decide which license to choose

Choose a license for your data

Check other researchers' license to know how to re-use their work



https://chooser-beta.creativecommons.org/

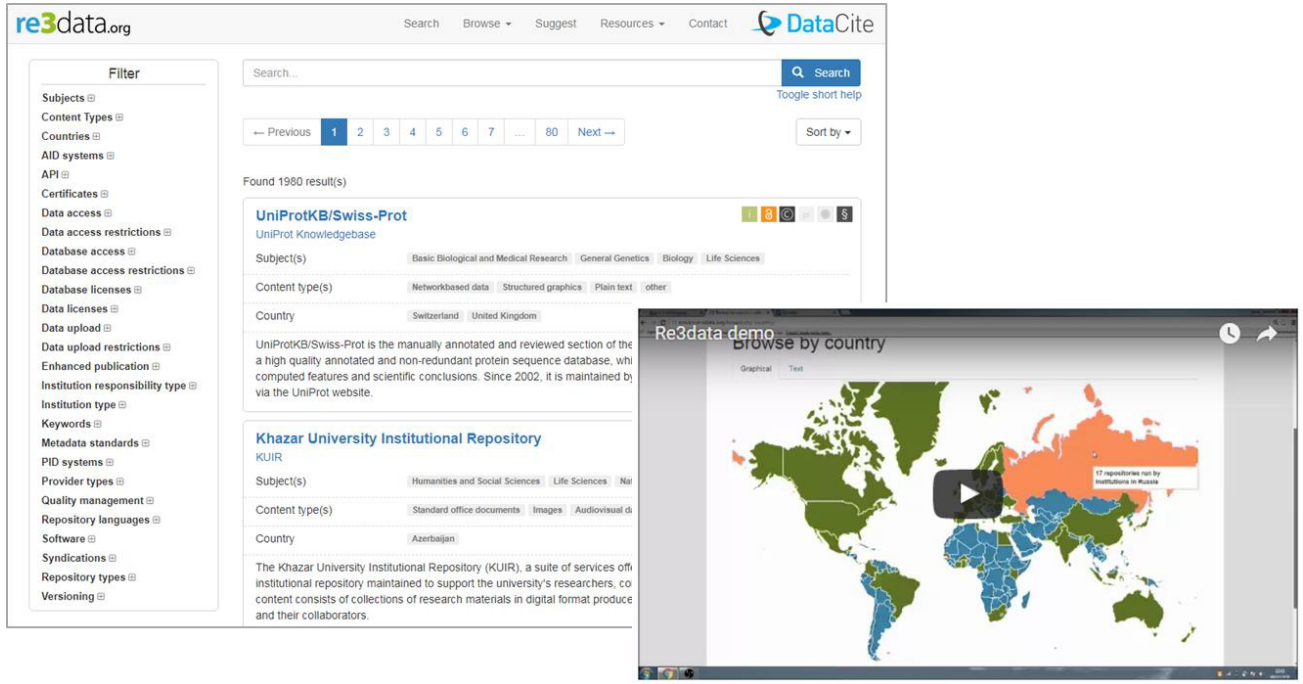
Deposit in a data repository

Long-term preservation of data.

Deposit in a data repository

The Re3data catalogue can be searched to find a home for data.

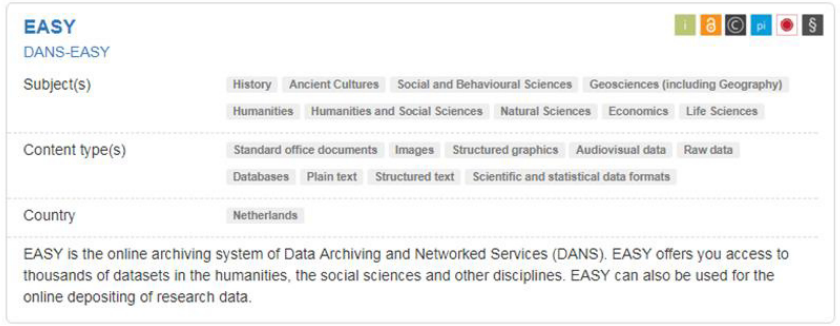
www.fosteropenscience.eu/content/re3data-demo



www.re3data.org

Criteria for selecting a repository

- Better to use a domain specific repository if available.
- Check they match particular data needs e.g. formats accepted, mixture of Open and Restricted Access.
- Do they assign a persistent and globally unique identifier for sustainable citations and to links back to particular researchers and grants?
- Look for certification as a '*Trustworthy Digital Repository*' with an explicit ambition to keep the data available in long term.



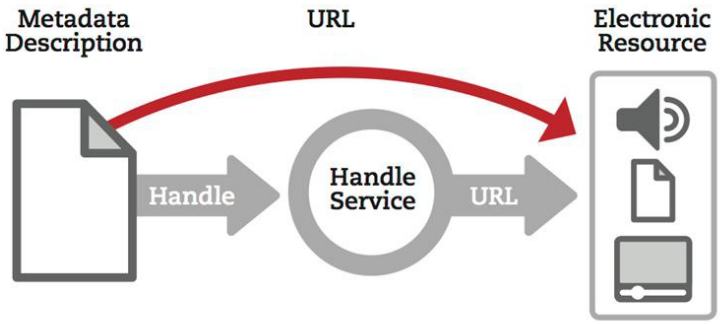
Icons to note open access, licences, PIDs, certificates...

www.re3data.org

What is a Persistent Identifier (PID)?

a long-lasting reference to a document, file or other object

- PIDs come in various forms e.g. ORCID, DOI, ISBN...
- Typically they're actionable i.e. type it into web browser to access.
- Many repositories will assign them on deposit.



www.re3data.org

Sensitive data

- Personal data (and metadata)
- Confidential data (trade secrets, investigations,...)
- Security data (passwords, financial information, national safety, military,….)
- Data protected by Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)
- Location Data/GPS/mobile phones
- Endangered (plant or animal) species, where their survival is dependent on the protection of their location data (biodiversity community)
- Combination of different datasets could lead to sensitive data?

- racial or ethnic origin
- political opinions
- religious or philosophical beliefs
- trade union membership
- genetic data, biometric data
- physical or mental health
- sex life or sexual orientation
- criminal offences

Sensitive data best practices

- Access controls
  passwords, firewall (viruses, hacking)
- Anonymisation
  removing or aggregating variables or reducing the precision or detailed textual meaning of a variable
- Encryption
  encoded digital information
- Share in a secure place
  no cloud drives
- Store in an isolated machine
  server not connected to Internet
- Secure disposal
  no data recovery is possible (uninstall)

Exercise - 25 min (+ 20 min discussion)

Imagine you are a biologist who is doing microscopy experiments imaging tissue specimens. The data captured by the imaging is 100s of GB in size and is then cleaned and analysed to produce derivatives of the original captured data. Some of these derivatives may eventually be published. In preparation for publication, the data will also be segmented and annotated using standard ontologies. Documentation will also include metadata standards that will sufficiently describe the experimental procedure to allow reproducibility. Publication of the data is mandatory due to funder policy and must be deposited in a repository within 3 years of data production and must use an open licence without restrictions on reuse.

Now…please split into groups and see if you can answer the following questions using the tools and guidelines that have been described:

- What **file format(s)** should data be captured/preserved in?
- Which **metadata standard(s)** should be used?
- What **ontology(ies)** should be used?
- Which **licence(s)** should be used?
- Which **repository** would be the best fit for these data?
- Do you foresee any problems with the data?
- (Hint: not all the questions can be answered definitively! – but why not?)

Data Schools

Data sharing and openness

guardian.co.uk

Give us back our crown jewels

Our taxes fund the collection of public data - yet we pay again to access it. Make the data freely available to stimulate innovation, argue Charles Arthur and Michael Cross

Charles Arthur and **Michael Cross**
The Guardian, Thursday 9 March 2006
Article history

And open research...

- Change the typical lifecycle.
- Publish earlier and release more.
- Papers + Data + Methods + Code…
- Support reproducibility.

Why make data available?

"It was *never* acceptable to publish papers without making data available."

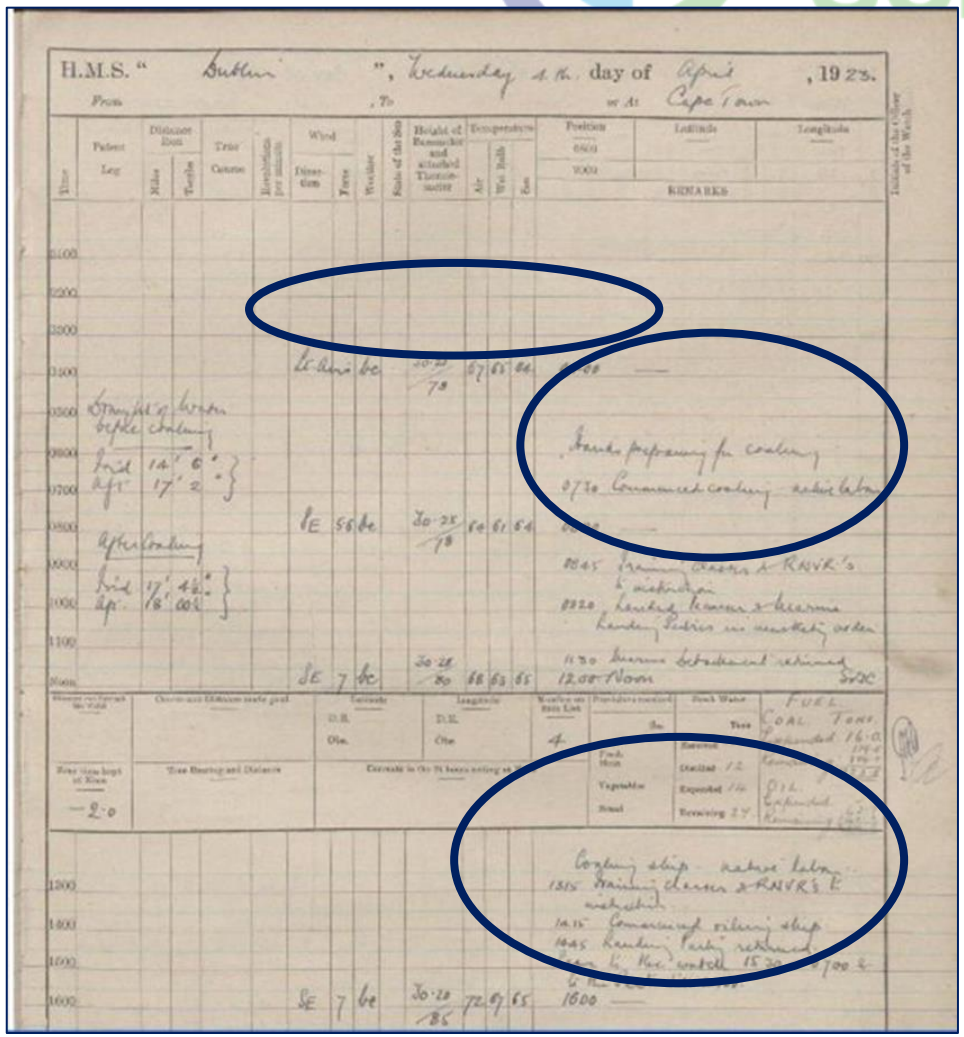
- Ewan Birney

#OpenData
#OpenScience

Original image via doi:10.1038/461145a. "Research cannot flourish if data are not preserved and made accessible. Data management should be woven into every course in science." - *Nature* 461, 145

The Old Weather Project

Data for research, not from research



Increased use and economic benefit

The case of NASA Landsat satellite imagery of the Earth's surface

Up to 2008

- Sold through the US Geological Survey for US$600 per scene
- Sales of 19,000 scenes per year
- Annual revenue of $11.4 million

Since 2009

- Freely available over the internet.
- Google Earth now uses the images.
- Transmission of 2,100,000 scenes per year.
- Estimated to have created value for the environmental management industry of $935 million, with direct benefit of more than $100 million per year to the US economy.
- Has stimulated the development of applications from a large number of companies worldwide.
- http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/IOTD/view.php?id=83394&src=ve

Validation of results

"It was a mistake in a spreadsheet that could have been easily overlooked: a few rows left out of an equation to average the values in a column.

The spreadsheet was used to draw the conclusion of an influential 2010 economics paper: that public debt of more than 90% of GDP slows down growth. This conclusion was later cited by the International Monetary Fund and the UK Treasury to justify programmes of austerity that have arguably led to riots, poverty and lost jobs."

The error that could subvert George Osborne's austerity programme

The theories on which the chancellor based his cuts policies have been shown to be based on an embarrassing mistake

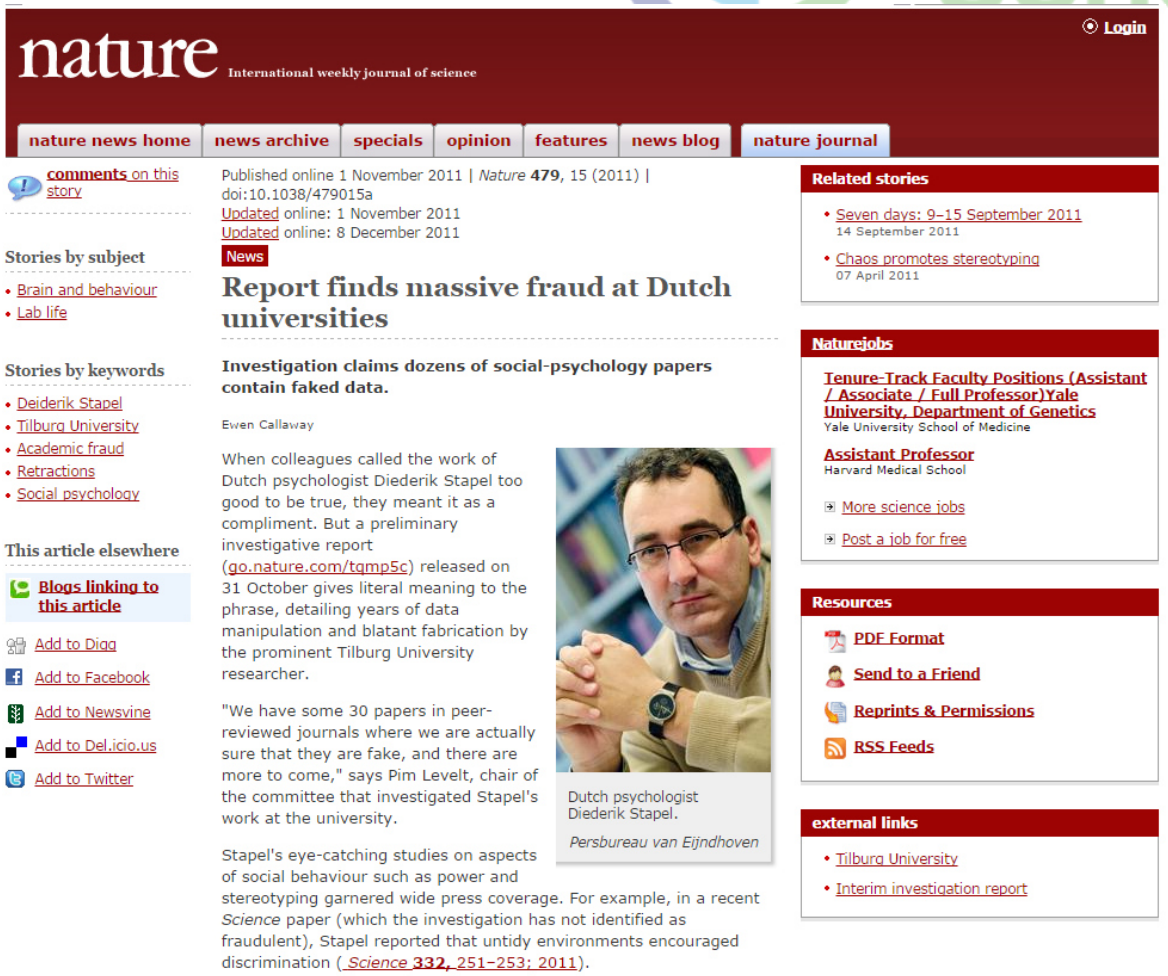
Charles Arthur and **Phillip Inman**
The Guardian, Thursday 18 April 2013 21.10 BST

George Osborne says that Ken Rogoff, the man whose economic error has been uncovered, has strongly influenced his thinking. Photograph: Stefan Wermuth/PA

www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2013/apr/18/uncovered-error-george-osborne-austerity

Cut down on academic fraud

Stapel – 55 publications – “fictitious data”



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Published online 1 November 2011 | *Nature* **479**, 15 (2011) | doi:10.1038/479015a
Updated online: 1 November 2011
Updated online: 8 December 2011

News

Report finds massive fraud at Dutch universities

Investigation claims dozens of social-psychology papers contain faked data.

Ewen Callaway

When colleagues called the work of Dutch psychologist Diederik Stapel too good to be true, they meant it as a compliment. But a preliminary investigative report (go.nature.com/tqmp5c) released on 31 October gives literal meaning to the phrase, detailing years of data manipulation and blatant fabrication by the prominent Tilburg University researcher.

"We have some 30 papers in peer-reviewed journals where we are actually sure that they are fake, and there are more to come," says Pim Levelt, chair of the committee that investigated Stapel's work at the university.

Dutch psychologist Diederik Stapel.
Persbureau van Eijndhoven

Stapel's eye-catching studies on aspects of social behaviour such as power and stereotyping garnered wide press coverage. For example, in a recent *Science* paper (which the investigation has not identified as fraudulent), Stapel reported that untidy environments encouraged discrimination (*Science* **332**, 251–253; 2011).

Related stories
- Seven days: 9–15 September 2011 (14 September 2011)
- Chaos promotes stereotyping (07 April 2011)

Naturejobs
- Tenure-Track Faculty Positions (Assistant / Associate / Full Professor)Yale University, Department of Genetics — Yale University School of Medicine
- Assistant Professor — Harvard Medical School
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- Interim investigation report

www.nature.com/news/2011/111101/full/479015a.html

Sharing leads to breakthroughs!

...and increases the speed of discovery

"It was unbelievable. Its not science the way most of us have practiced in our careers. But we all realised that we would never get biomarkers unless all of us parked our egos and intellectual property noses outside the door and agreed that all of our data would be public immediately."

Dr John Trojanowski, University of Pennsylvania

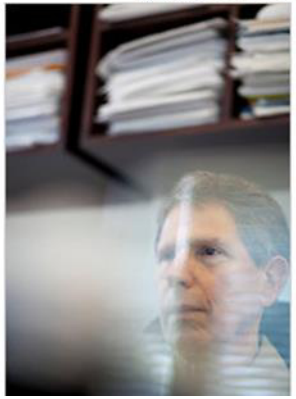
http:///www.nytimes.com/2010/08/13/health/research/13alzheimer.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

Sharing of Data Leads to Progress on Alzheimer's

By GINA KOLATA
Published: August 12, 2010

In 2003, a group of scientists and executives from the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, the drug and medical-imaging industries, universities and nonprofit groups joined in a project that experts say had no precedent: a collaborative effort to find the biological markers that show the progression of Alzheimer's disease in the human brain.

Enlarge This Image



Now, the effort is bearing fruit with a wealth of recent scientific papers on the early diagnosis of Alzheimer's using methods like PET scans and tests of spinal fluid. More than 100 studies are under way to test drugs that might slow or stop the disease.

And the collaboration is already serving as a model for similar efforts against Parkinson's disease. A $40 million project to look for biomarkers for Parkinson's, sponsored by the Michael J. Fox Foundation, plans to enroll 600 study subjects in the United States and Europe.

How do you share data effectively?

- Use appropriate repositories, this catalogue is a good place to start:

  http://www.re3data.org
- Document and describe it enough for others to understand, use and cite:

  http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/how-guides/cite-datasets
- License it so others can reuse:

  www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/how-guides/license-research-data

Data Schools

re3data.org
REGISTRY OF RESEARCH DATA REPOSITORIES

Who has heard of this before...?

Findable **A**ccessible **I**nteroperable **R**eusable

- Metadata
- PIDs
- Repositories

- Metadata
- Open file formats and software

- Metadata
- Ontologies
- Repositories

- Metadata
- Licences

European perspective...

https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/7769a148-f1f6-11e8-9982-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-80611283

What FAIR means: 15 principles

Findable:

F1. (meta)data are assigned a globally unique and persistent identifier;

F2. data are described with rich metadata;

F3. metadata clearly and explicitly include the identifier of the data it describes;

F4. (meta)data are registered or indexed in a searchable resource;

Accessible:

A1. (meta)data are retrievable by their identifier using a standardized communications protocol;

A1.1 the protocol is open, free, and universally implementable;

A1.2. the protocol allows for an authentication and authorization procedure, where necessary;

A2. metadata are accessible, even when the data are no longer available;

Interoperable:

I1. (meta)data use a formal, accessible, shared, and broadly applicable language for knowledge representation.

I2. (meta)data use vocabularies that follow FAIR principles;

I3. (meta)data include qualified references to other (meta)data;

Reusable:

R1. meta(data) are richly described with a plurality of accurate and relevant attributes;

R1.1. (meta)data are released with a clear and accessible data usage license;

R1.2. (meta)data are associated with detailed provenance;

R1.3. (meta)data meet domain-relevant community standards;

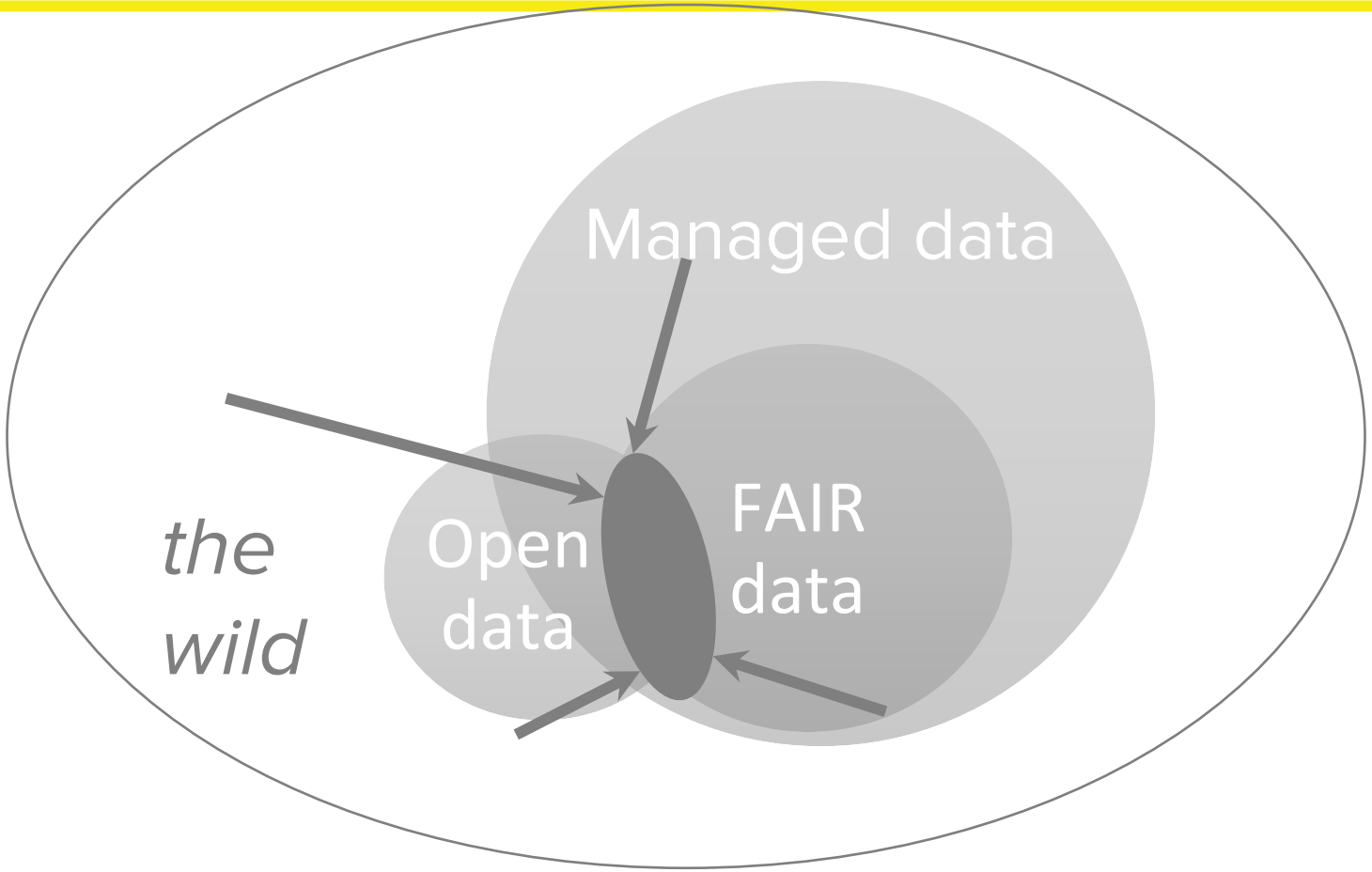
doi: 10.1038/sdata.2016.18

Comprehensive descriptions can be found at https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/

Common misconceptions

- FAIR data does not have to be open.
- The principles do not specify particular technologies or implementations e.g. semantic web.
- FAIR is not a standard to be followed or strict criteria – it's a spectrum/continuum.
- It doesn't only apply to the life sciences.

Increasing that which is FAIR & open



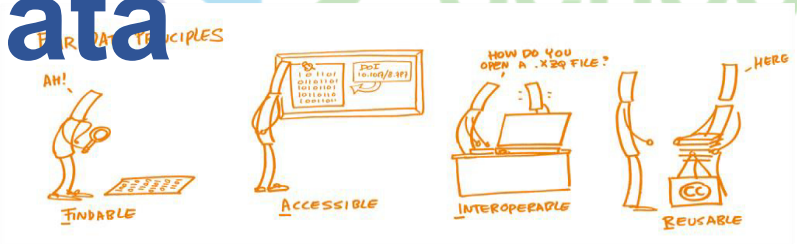
Adapted from DCC.

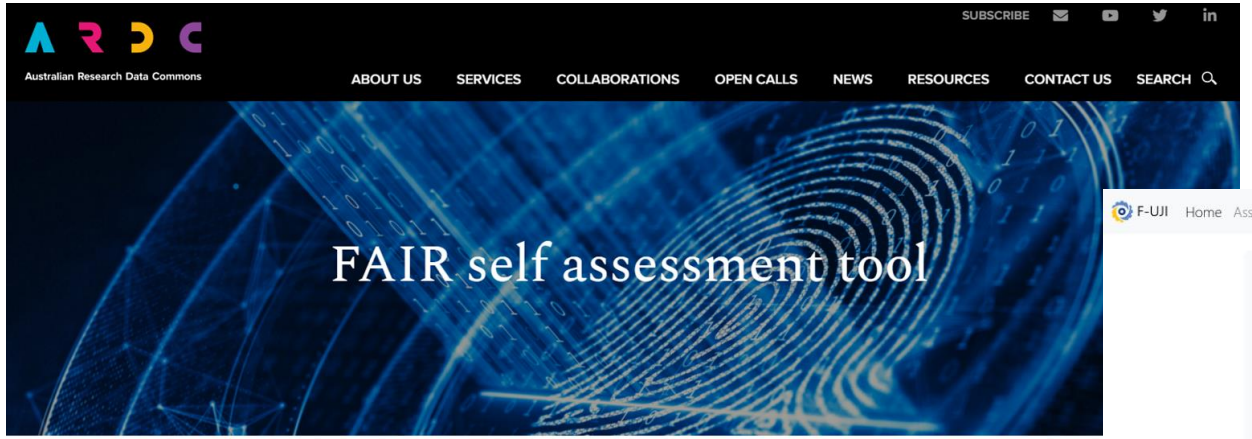
FAIR ≠ Open

as open as possible, as closed as necessary

Image: ‘Balancing rocks’ by Viewminder CC-BY-SA-ND www.flickr.com/photos/light_seeker/7780857224

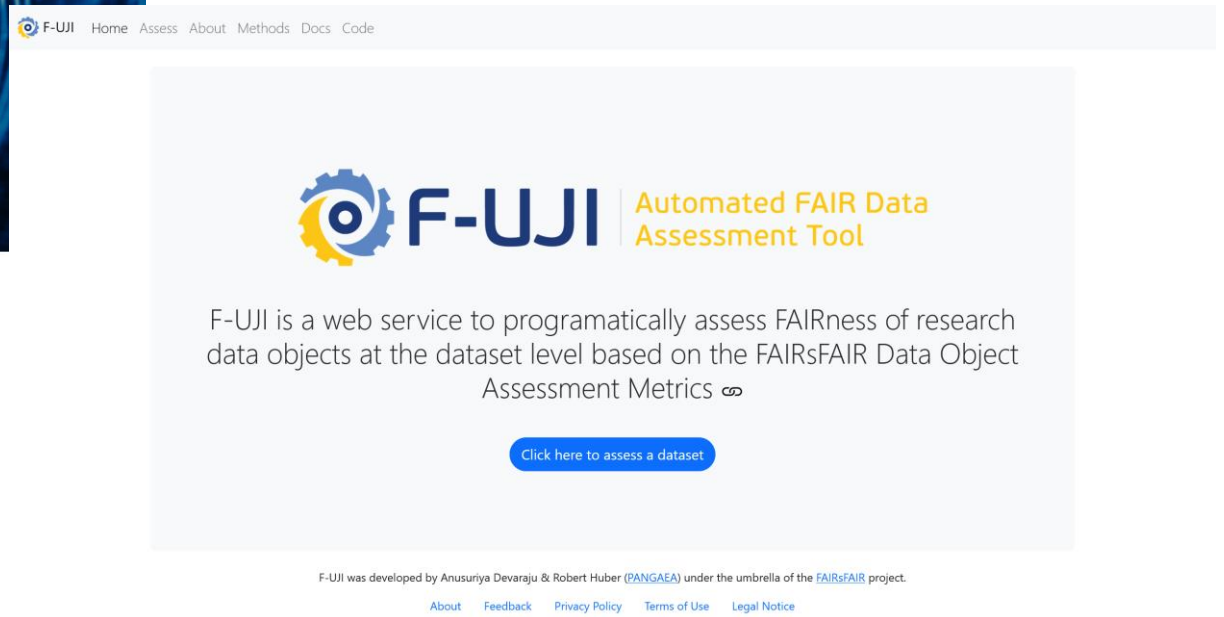
Check how FAIR is your data





Welcome to the Australian Research Data Commons' FAIR data self assessment tool. Using this tool you will be able to assess the 'FAIRness' of a dataset and determine how to enhance its FAIRness (where applicable).

You will be asked questions related to the principles underpinning Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable (FAIR). Once you have answered all the questions in each section you will be given a 'green bar' indicator based on your answers in that section, and when all sections are completed, an overall 'FAIRness' indicator is provided.



https://ardc.edu.au/resources/working-with-data/fair-data/fair-self-assessment-tool/
https://www.f-uji.net/

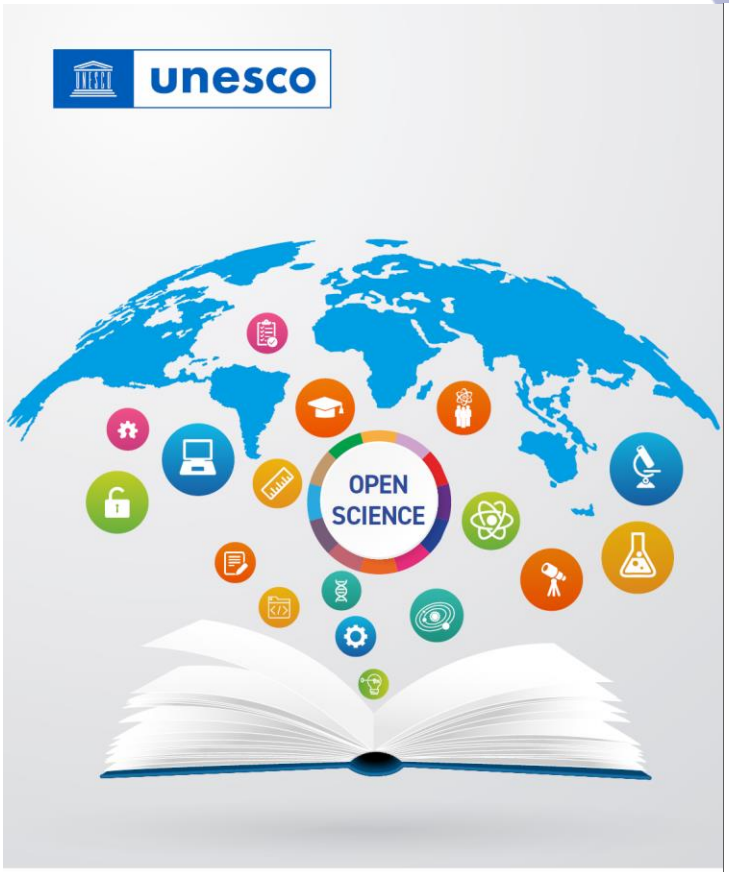
FAIR isn't the only consideration...

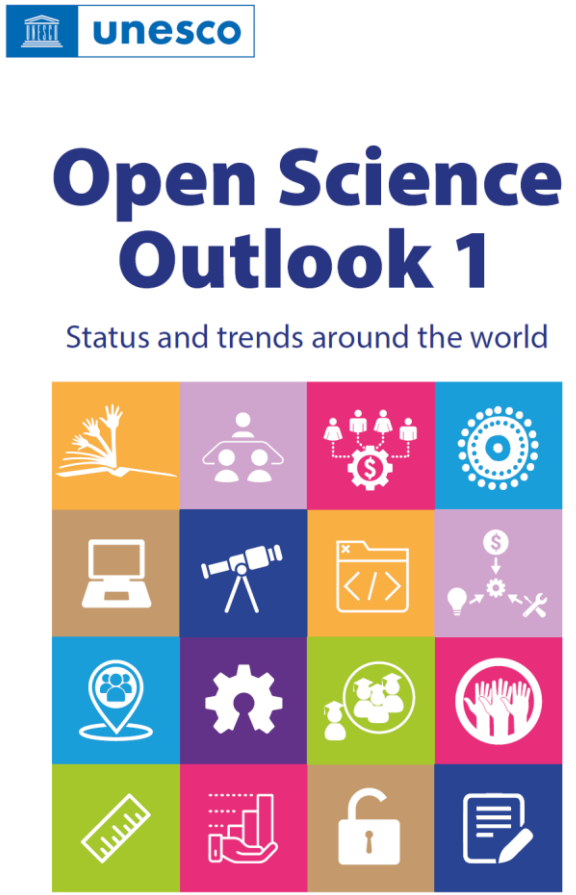
New(ish) frontiers...

https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000387324

- Collaboration
- Reproducibility
- Transparency
- Trust

"Open science practices are on the rise but access to, participation in and sharing of the benefits from open science are uneven across the world."

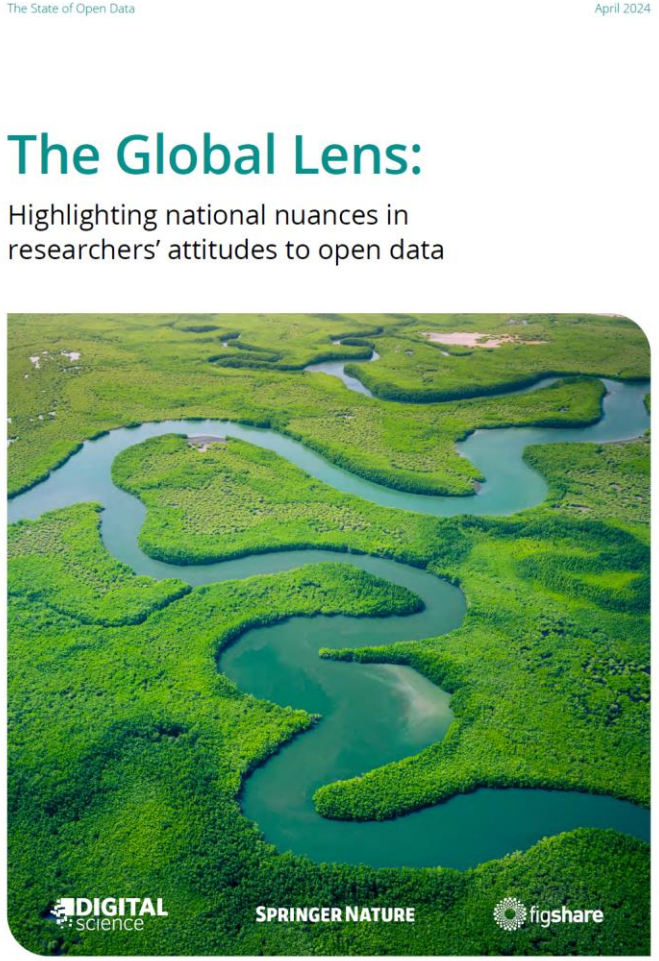




New(ish) frontiers...

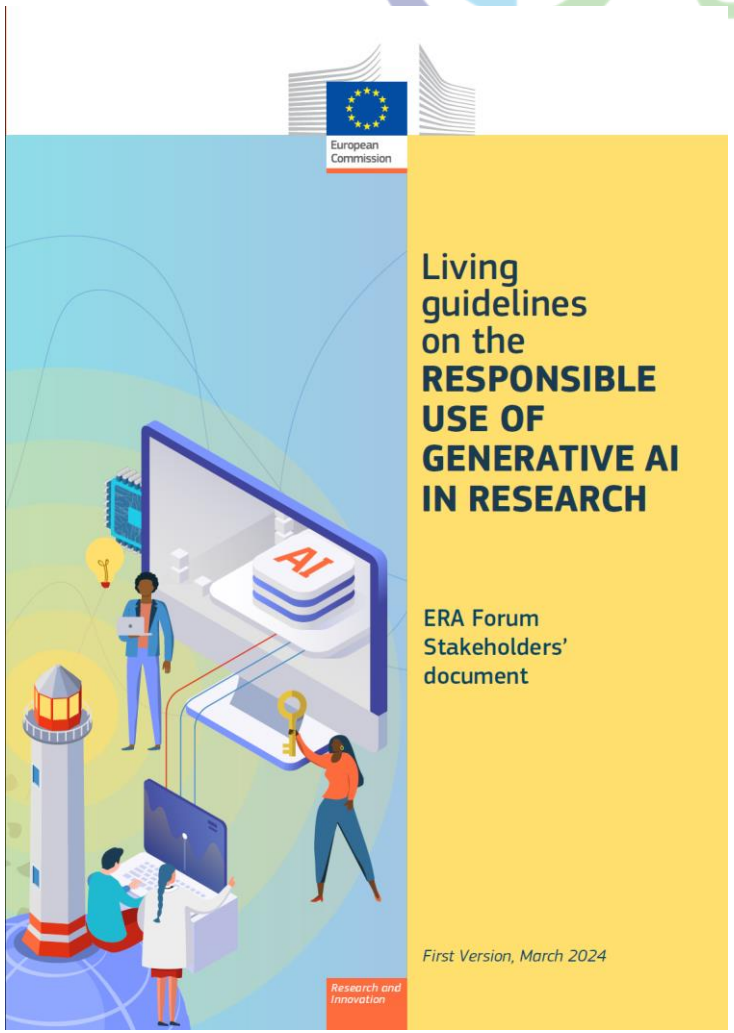
https://www.springernature.com/gp/researchers/campaigns/state-of-open-data

- **Support is not making its way to those who need it**
  Almost three-quarters of respondents had never received support with making their data openly available.
- **One size does not fit all**
  Variations in responses from different subject expertise and geographies highlight a need for a more nuanced approach to research data management support globally.
- **Challenging stereotypes**
  Are later career academics really opposed to progress? The results of the 2023 survey indicate that career stage is not a significant factor in open data awareness or support levels.
- **Credit is an ongoing issue**
  For eight years running, our survey has revealed a recurring concern among researchers: the perception that they don't receive sufficient recognition for openly sharing their data.
- **AI awareness hasn't translated to action**
  For the first time, this year we asked survey respondents to indicate if they were using ChatGPT or similar AI tools for data collection, processing and metadata creation.



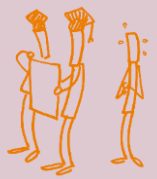
New(ish) frontiers...

https://european-research-area.ec.europa.eu/news/living-guidelines-responsible-use-generative-ai-research-published



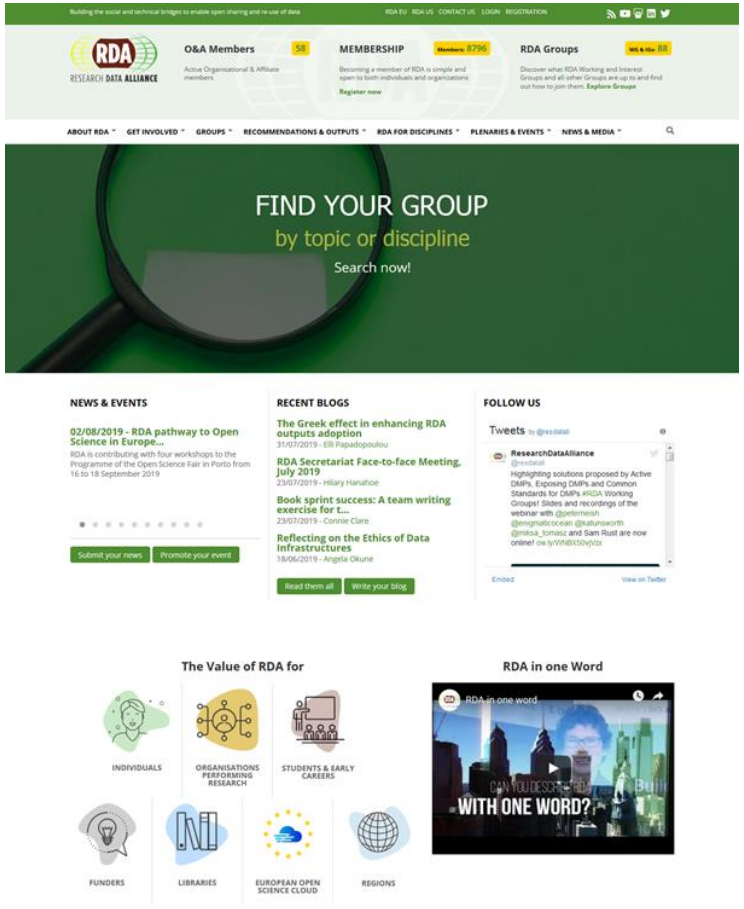
FOSTER Open Science

Data Schools

What is Open Science?	Best Practice in Open Research	Open Access Publishing	Open Peer Review	Sharing Preprints
				
Data Protection & Ethics	**Open Source Software & Workflows**	**Managing & Sharing Research Data**	**Open Science & Innovation**	**Open Licensing**
				

https://www.fosteropenscience.eu/toolkit

Research Data Alliance



https://www.rd-alliance.org

Data Schools

Data Management Plans

Bringing together what you've learnt

- Make informed decisions to anticipate and avoid problems.
- Avoid duplication, data loss and security breaches.
- Develop procedures early on for consistency.
- Ensure data are accurate, complete, reliable and secure.
- Save time and effort to make your life easier!
- Useful both to researchers and institutions

Making plans

They sound dull, but data-management plans are essential, and funders must explain why.

Data are the alpha and omega of scientific and social research. A versatile good, they exist both as raw material for producing knowledge and, when processed and interpreted with an expert eye, the end product of the exercise.

So it might sound like a truism that researchers should conscientiously handle, preserve and — where appropriate — share the data they generate and use. The problem is that this can be hard to do.

As science produces day by day a huge volume of data, it's a growing challenge to manage and store this information. To encourage this, many funders now ask applicants to submit a concise data-management plan with their grant proposals: effectively, a to-do list that details how they plan to collect, clean, store and share the products of their research.

Such plans are important, and are something that *Nature* supports (we discuss them in detail in a Careers article on page 403). But to accelerate acceptance of what some might deem just another administrative burden, science funders and research institutions must work to streamline the process and to explain the need and benefits.

First, rigorously collected, well-preserved data sets — including meaningful descriptors or metadata — will help the data owners to reach solid, meaningful results. Second, they will help future investigators to make sense of and reuse data, thereby enhancing utility and reproducibility. Preserving comprehensive data, ideally for many years, also reduces the risk of duplicating science done by others.

Still, there is no single recipe for proper data management. The task varies according to the field of science, project size and the specific types of data in question. That makes cross-disciplinary common standards unlikely, so research agencies need to engage with different scientific communities to create formats that best serve specific disciplines. To avoid a hotchpotch of standards, formats and data protocols — undesirable in our increasingly global scientific enterprise — research agencies in all parts of the world must engage.

An initiative for voluntary international alignment of research data-management policies, launched in January by Science Europe and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research, is an important step in that direction. And existing data stewardship in particle physics and genomics shows that internationally aligned data governance not only is perfectly doable, but also has a positive impact on collaborative research. NASA pioneered this approach, setting up a centre in the 1980s to specifically curate the data from the Infrared Astronomical Satellite.

The message must now be passed on to scientists who work in fields less familiar with big data. Many of these, at all career stages, are worryingly unprepared. A survey of European researchers last year revealed that many have never been asked to provide a data-management plan, and that most are unaware of policies and guidelines already in place to help them. Only one-quarter of respondents to the survey, carried out by the European Commission and the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers, had actually written a data-management plan, with another quarter saying they didn't even know what such a plan might be. There is nothing to suggest Europe is unusual in this.

Funders and universities, then, must ensure that the rationale of data management, and the basic skills of exercising it properly, become part of postgraduate education everywhere. Training and support must go further and be offered at every career level.

The laudable move towards open science — under which data are shared — makes the need for good data management more pressing than ever: there's no point in sharing data if they aren't clean and annotated enough to be reused. If you haven't got a plan for your data, you need one now. ■

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CAREERS

PERSONAL ETHICS How a vegetarian biologist balances his beliefs with his work p.405 | BLOG Personal stories and careers counsel http://blogs.nature.com/naturejobs | NATURE.JOBS For the latest career listings and advice www.nature.com

ADAPTED FROM GETTY

DATA MANAGEMENT

For the record

Making project data freely available is vital for open science.

BY QUIRIN SCHIERMEIER

When Marjorie Etique learnt that she had to create a data-management plan for her next research project, she was not sure exactly what to do.

The soil chemist, a postdoc at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich, studies the interaction of trace elements in sediments and water. While preparing a grant proposal for the Swiss National Science Foundation last October, she learnt of the funder's new data rules. These require applicants to provide a written plan for the organization and long-term storage of their research data, to help minimize the risk of data loss and provide guidance for other scientists on how to use the data in the future.

Etique found the task daunting. "Data management is really not my primary skill," she says. "I had absolutely no idea how to go about it." She was able to get advice from her supervisor and from ETH's digital library service. Other researchers might not be so lucky, and might not even know what a data-management plan is — let alone why they would need one and how to produce it. Here, we answer these questions.

WHAT ARE DATA-MANAGEMENT PLANS?

A data-management plan explains how researchers will handle their data during and after a project, and encompasses creating, sharing and preserving research data of any type, including text, spreadsheets, images, recordings, models, algorithms and software. It does not matter whether the data are generated by large pieces of research equipment, such as imaging tools or particle accelerators, or from straightforward field observation.

Many funders are asking grant applicants to provide data plans. Requirements vary from one discipline to another. But in general, scientists will need to describe — before they begin any research — what data they will generate; how the data will be documented, described, secured and curated; and who will have access to those data after the research is completed. They must also explain any data sharing and reuse restrictions, such as legal and confidentiality issues. Researchers can consult their funder and their host institute's digital library services for assistance. Colleagues who have previously produced data plans may also be able to help (see 'Keeping stock').

WHO NEEDS THEM?

Data management is one example of the way in which public research sponsors and research institutions are implementing 'open science', the push to make scientific research and data freely accessible. Many funding agencies have made data-management plans mandatory for grant applicants in the past decade or so. All US federal agencies, including the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health, have such policies. Data-management plans must also now be included in grant proposals to the European Research Council and other European Union-funded research programmes. And many national funding agencies in Europe — including the UK research councils and the London-based Wellcome Trust, world's largest biomedical research charity — also ask for data plans.

Many scientists already practise data management by default. Astronomers, for example, have been doing so for decades when calibrating their observations and archiving huge amounts of telescope-survey data in standardized, machine-readable catalogues for reuse.

Geneticists, too, use special data repositories to archive the vast amounts of DNA and genome-sequencing data (see go.nature.com/2omlrbe). But less data-intensive fields of science and social research also benefit from data management. For example, geochemists analysing soil bacteria and mineral products in different environments can use it to ▸

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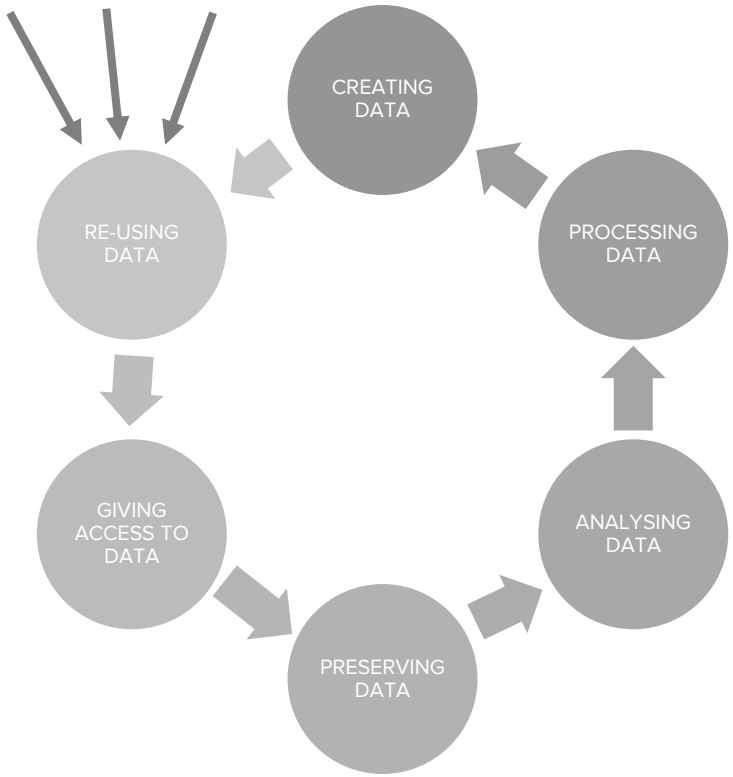
Schiermeier, Q. "Data management made simple" *Nature* **555**, 403-405 (2018).
https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-03071-1
doi: 10.1038/d41586-018-03071-1

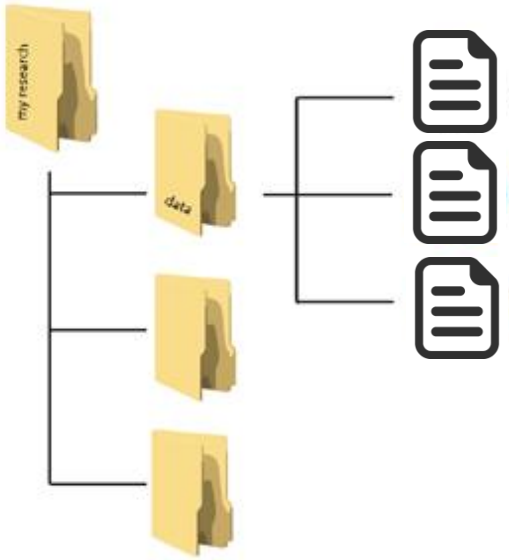
Common themes in DMPs

1. Description of data to be collected / created (i.e. content, type, format, volume...).
2. Standards/methodologies for data collection & management.
3. Ethics and Intellectual Property (highlight any restrictions on data sharing e.g. embargoes, confidentiality).
4. Plans for data sharing and access (i.e. how, when, to whom).
5. Strategy for long-term preservation.

Planning trick 1: think backwards

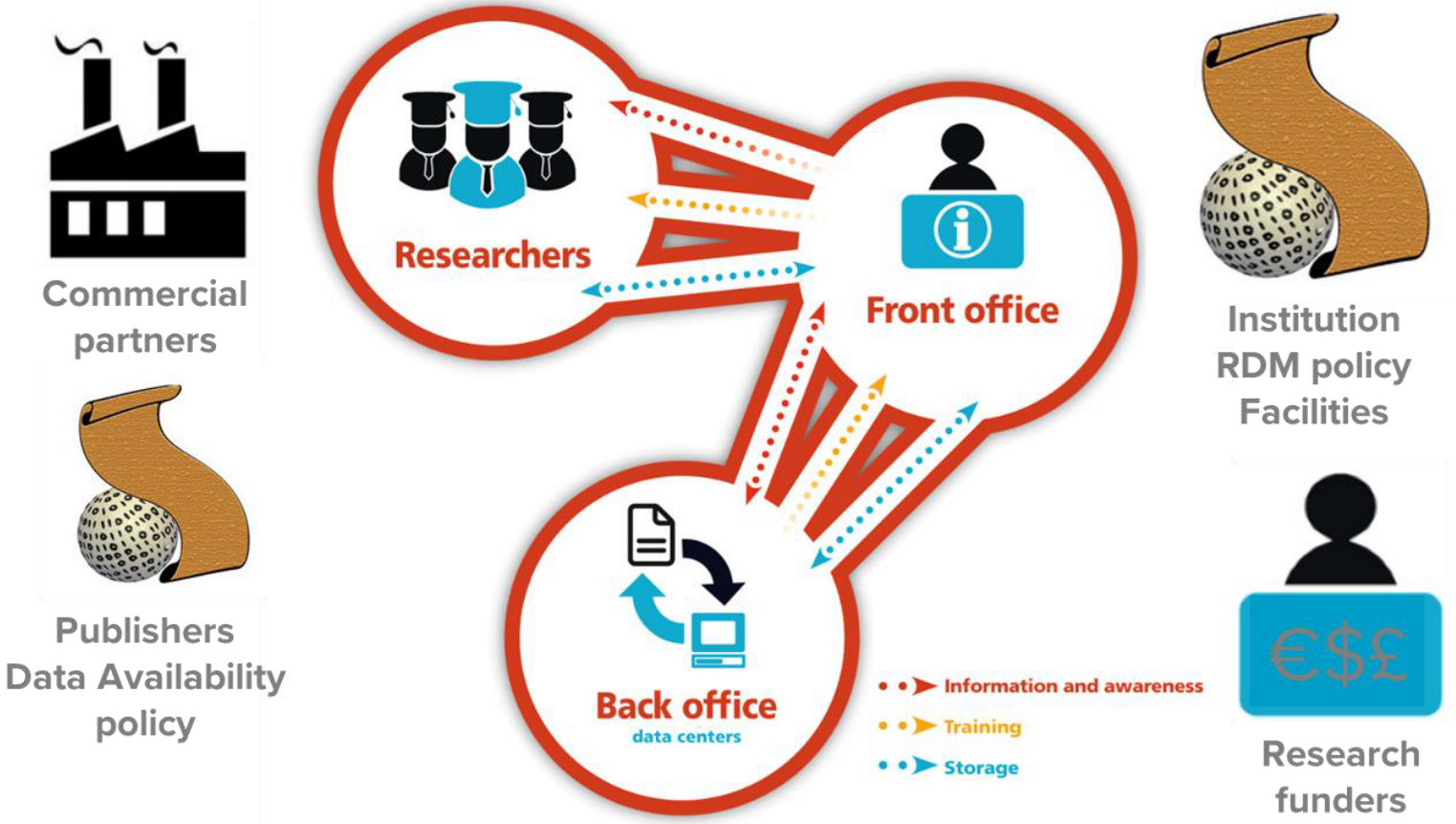
What data organisation would a re-user like?





Design how you will organise data in the project (folder structure, file naming convention, ...)

Planning trick 2: include RDM stakeholders



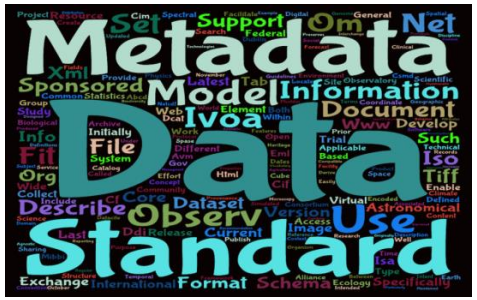
www.openaire.eu/briefpaper-rdm-infonoads

Planning trick 3: ground your plan in reality

Base plans on available skills, support and good practice for the field – show it's feasible to implement.

re3data.org
REGISTRY OF RESEARCH DATA REPOSITORIES

CC 0 ZERO



What makes a good DMP?

- Clear, detailed information that is relevant to the science:
  - adopting recognised standards.
  - practices in line with norms for that field.
  - use of support services e.g. university storage, subject repositories…
- Realistic approach that is feasible to implement.
- Evidence of consultation and seeking advice.
- Proper justification of restrictions and costs.
- **Have you taken time to reflect on what to do?**

Is the information specific enough?

“we will use suitable formats to ensure that our data can be preserved and sustained over the long term”

- Which standards? Name them!
- Show that you know which are suitable.
- Does your chosen repository have preferences?

Are decisions justified?

“data will be made available upon request to bona fide medieval historians”

- Why is it restricted?
- Could other communities not reuse the data?
- Will the research team be around to handle access requests in the future?

A better response...

“We will provide MP3 audio files for online dissemination. While this is not an open format, it is well-established and the most widely supported. High-resolution WAV files will be used for the archival master recordings.”

- Be clear, specific and detailed.
- Justify decisions.

Example plans

- Plans from several funders and disciplines via DCC www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/data-management-plans/guidance-examples
- Scientific DMPs submitted to the NSF (USA) provided by DataOne https://www.dataone.org/data-management-planning
- DMPs published in RIO journal http://riojournal.com/browse_user_collection_documents.php?collection_id=3&journal_id=17
- Share yours! - www.dcc.ac.uk/share-DMPs

DCC Checklist for a DMP

- The DCC assessed existing funder requirements, DMP templates and other best practice to see what should be included in plans. This was synthesised down into common themes and questions.
- 13 questions on what's asked across the board.
- Prompts/pointers to help researchers get started.
- Guidance on how to answer.

www.dcc.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/resource/DMP_Checklist_2013.pdf

Thank you!

Questions?

(Please get in touch!)