Borealis to House Sensitive Metadata

Borealis is the Canadian Dataverse Repository. It holds data from most public Canadian universities in their own repositories called “Dataverses”. In essence, Borealis is the repository of those institutional repositories. It facilitates access to data - some of which is restricted and requires owner authorization to access the data itself. That being said, the metadata about these restricted datasets allow for their findability.

It logically follows from this that, given our goals of making restricted data findable with heavily anonymized metadata, borealis could be a central tool in our on-going endeavor. Using Borealis also has the added benefit of linking a persistent identifier to the dataset, and of being automatically converted into a standardized DDI XML file. Of course, there are certain qualms about using a national repository such as Borealis. Being a national service, Borealis data is often scrapped by foreign academic colleagues in both peer and “near-peer” nations. Given the sensitivity of this data, how “findable” we want this data to be beyond the confounds of Canada remains a point of contention.

Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that this can be done safely and effectively to preserve the knowledge of these dataset's existence and allow for them to be traced back to a persistent identifier. The present document assesses the feasibility and benefits of using Borealis as a haven for sensitive data metadata.

Creation of the CRDCN Dataverse

Before even talking about how to safely upload metadata pertaining to sensitive datasets, it is important to have an idea of how this would be done in the first place. The first step would be for the CRDCN to set up a Dataverse of their own within Borealis. This isn’t particularly difficult, but it would require discussions with the Borealis team as to where this Dataverse would be set up. For instance, not all Dataverses are immediately visible on the main Borealis page; for the most part, only academic institutions are advertised on the main page. However, there are other repositories that are “hidden”