Data Management Plans: from idea to reality

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The context:
Data Management Is Good™

- National
  - Policies, Funding – can influence processes
    - But it’s project-oriented
  - Efficiency - collect once, lose never
  - Evidence – need for data in policy
- Institutional
  - Enduring – outlive projects/programs
  - Responsibilities – Ownership, Stewardship
- Individual
  - Requirements, Benefits for research

A key player: Institutions

- Not just Universities
- Employ the staff that collect the data
- Manage the funds acquired by staff
- May have obligations,
  - especially long-term (beyond staff tenure)
  - Legal and moral (is research data a ‘record’?)
  - Probably “own” the data
- Certainly have opportunities
- Have existing funding models
  - Shuffling between buckets…

Institutions and individuals

- Once the institution “wants” to help, it faces costs
  - Infrastructure
  - Support for active projects
  - Support for completed projects
- Enable individuals to deposit, manage and re-use data
  - Who sometimes may not want to, or can’t

Individuals are *human*…

- Fear of missed “nuggets” in their data
  - Milk it for everything, for ever and ever
- Fear of missed errors
  - Probably varies by domain and career-stage
- Fear unknown custodians/stewards
  - Can’t do as good a job as my PhD students
- Fear inappropriate leaks
  - Privacy/ethics,
  - first-to-market,
  - relationship to data providers (drug users, fishermen, …)
- Fear the cost of effort
  - Takes time (and money) away from what they’re good at
- Fear lack of recognition
  - I’ve done it for the national good, how about some accolades?
- Fear of trusting somebody else’s data
  - That person, or their repository may have done something wrong

Plan ahead!! Enable users...

- Influence a project early
  - Inform them of “best practice”
- Develop a relationship
  - Awareness, Engagement, Trust!
- Reduce costs
  - No tossing over the fence
- Enhance functionality for users
  - They can invest in value-add

Implementation

- Get users out of data management at some level
  - Scale costs on infrastructures, services and skills that are sufficiently common, and enable users to do their bit
- Deal with user fears
  - Some of it needs education, some of it needs trust to be established
- Users provide domain specific skills and domain policies
  - Coordination role within a domain – required!
  - But need technical backing when it crosses some boundary