Making data sharing the new normal: progress and challenges

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Abstract:
The case for open data to support good research practice is increasingly inarguable. Open access to research data can help speed the pace of discovery and deliver more value by enabling reuse and reducing duplication. Good data practice also makes research more efficient, effective and fulfilling for researchers. A survey conducted in 2017 by Springer Nature with more than 7,000 researchers found that, despite the known benefits, there is still a significant proportion of data that is not being shared. The survey explored some of the main challenges for researchers in data sharing, including how data is organised; knowledge of copyright and licensing; knowledge about repositories; time; and costs. This poster will summarize the findings of this survey, and our considered views on increasing data sharing amongst researchers.

Related:
Full survey dataset (CC-BY 4.0): https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.5971387; Whitepaper based on the results of this survey (CC-BY 4.0): https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.5975011

Survey respondents

Breakdown by subject and region:

- Medical sciences: 2,215
- Biological sciences: 4,692
- Physical sciences: 137
- Earth sciences: 67
- Other sciences: 359

Survey respondents by region:

- Australasia: 110
- North America: 64
- Europe: 55
- South America: 16
- Asia: 16
- Africa: 16

Importance of data discoverability:

- 76% of respondents highly rate the importance of their data being discoverable: most popular ranking was 10/10

Importance out of 10:

- Other sciences: 7.7
- Physical sciences: 7.2
- Medical sciences: 7.7
- Earth sciences: 7.8
- Biological sciences: 6.9

Main challenge to data sharing is organising data in a presentable and useful way

Almost half of all respondents (46%) said that organising data was a challenge, followed by confusion around copyright (37%) and not knowing where to share data (33%)

Data sharing by subject

- Repository: 54%
- Supplementary: 41%
- Both: 16%
- Neither: 16%

Majority of researchers share their data in some way

63% of respondents stated that they generally submitted data files as supplementary information, deposited the files in a repository, or both

What can be done to increase data sharing?

- Improving education and support on good data management, particularly at early stages of researchers’ careers
- Creating faster, easier routes for sharing data - making data easily accessible and usable by researchers