Opportunities for Data Exchange

Opportunities for Data Sharing

There is a growing consensus in science, and society generally, that primary research data resulting from publicly funded research should be shared widely so that the maximum benefits can be gained from the investment. There are common barriers and some reluctance, but also powerful drivers and benefits related to putting this general principle into practice.

Why should you as a researcher care about data sharing?
Successful examples, such as sharing data through the Worldwide Protein Data Bank, Pangaea and GenBank, clearly demonstrate that data sharing can provide enormous benefits. Introducing or intensifying data sharing in your discipline may be worth the effort as well.

Do you know about others' views?
The EU FP7-funded ODE project has collected views from numerous individuals – representative of all involved stakeholder groups – on the opportunities for data exchange. These views were analysed and consolidated in order to inform each group about each others' views and possible future activities.
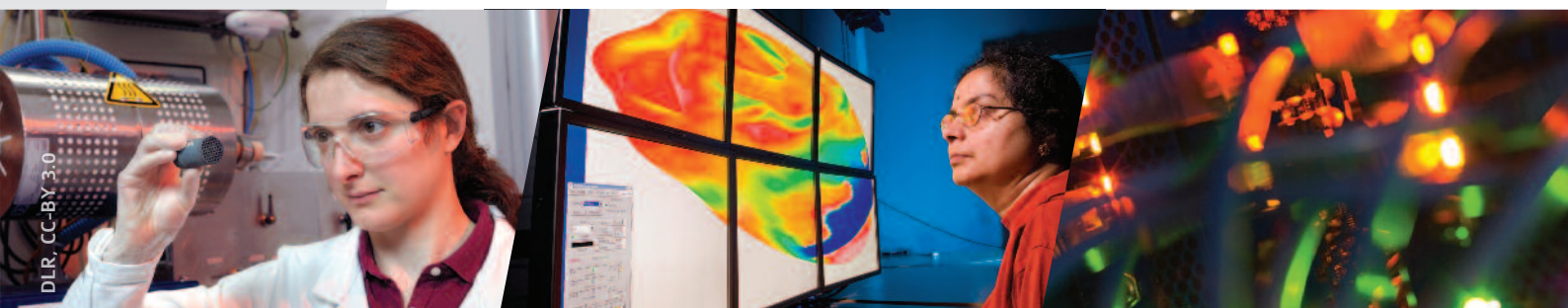
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What ODE has learned:

Publishers note that more and more data is submitted together with publications; evolving editorial policies and emerging data journals reflect this. However, publishers make it clear that their own infrastructure might not be sufficient to preserve data and make it available in the long-term. Therefore, publishers recognise the need to work closely with data centres and researchers to provide reciprocal links between publications and data.

Co-operation between researchers, funders and service providers, such as data centres, libraries and publishers is needed. More and more funding agencies require proper data management and open access to the data from supported projects. Clear standards, best practices and tools can help you to share your data. Data centres and libraries are willing to work with you on an incentive system that gives credit to you, the data producer, e.g. in the form of enabling the citation of data. Furthermore, they will offer advice and training on finding, preparing and managing data.

What you and your organization can do:

Funding agencies and service providers may depend on your learned societies' or editorial boards' views about a number of things, such as which data can be shared, or where ethical or other concerns will prevent data sharing. In your discipline or community of practice, you can therefore look for, and support, one of these representative bodies. This will help them formulate rules for appropriate data management plans and best practice for sharing that acknowledge the researcher's point of view.

Within your field, you should identify the best providers of data stewardship and work with them to establish the most useful data formats and descriptions (metadata) that enable your data to be discovered and re-used. If capable providers do not exist or if their capacity is too limited, you should communicate this to your research funders.

And don't forget to promote incentives: "Credit where credit is due!"

Data is the new gold.
"We have a huge goldmine... Let's start mining it."

Neelie Kroes, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for the Digital Agenda
http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/11/872&type=HTML

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