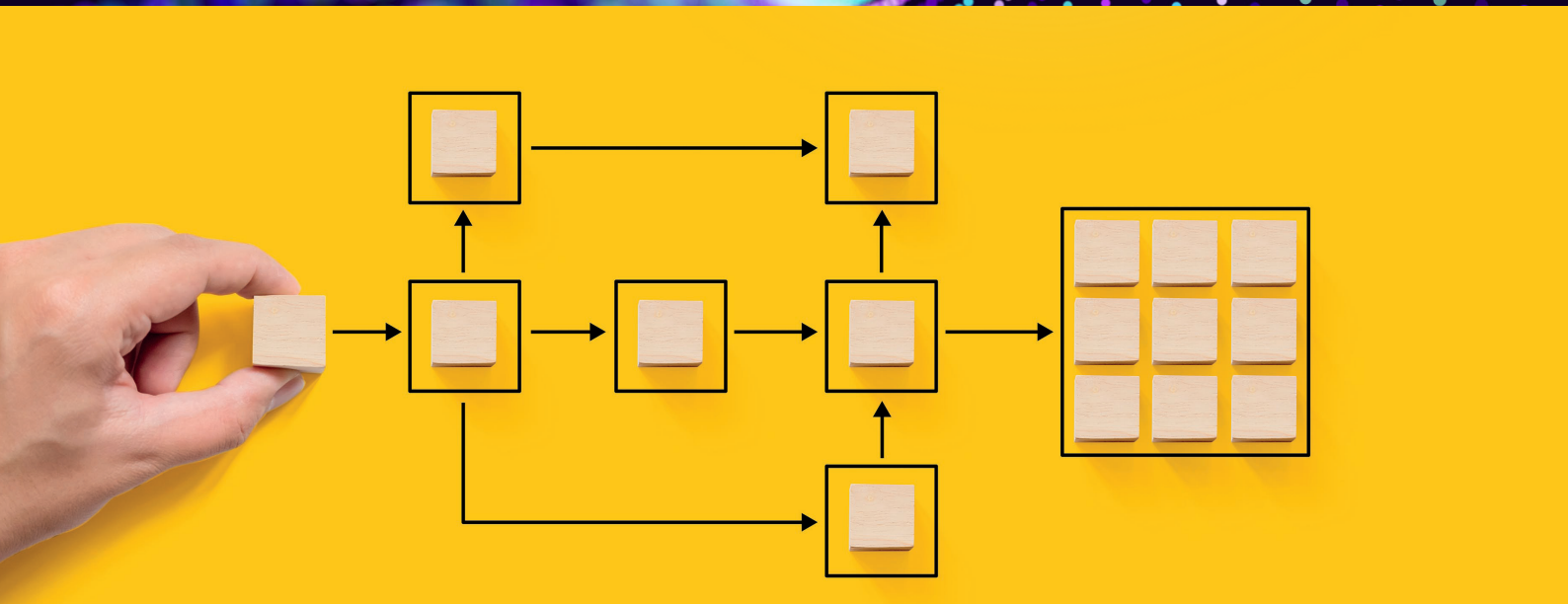
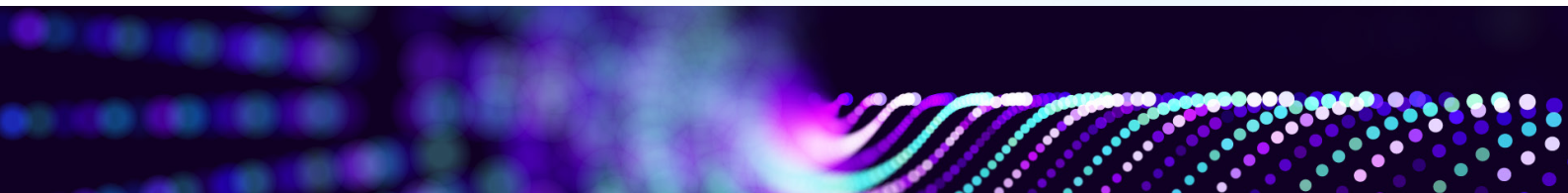




Building a more trustworthy repository at Graz University of Technology



Authors names, affiliations and ORCIDs:

□ Birgit Söser, Graz University of Technology,
<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-0727-4756>

Summary:

FAIR-enabling and trustworthy data repositories play a central role in making and keeping data FAIR over time. While there is ongoing debate on what constitutes trustworthiness, there is broad agreement that transparency and evidence is essential to enable end users to make informed decisions about the repository services they use. In the scope of FAIR assessment, there are also steps to take in the findability of assessment information, and the exposure of assessment results. FAIR-IMPACT has developed guidelines to improve the transparency of, and trust in, repositories. In this support action successful applicants will have the opportunity to test the guidelines and receive guidance on exposing relevant metadata at the organisational and object level to facilitate discovery, provide context, and support interoperability.

In this support action, participants had the opportunity to learn about these new guidelines in depth, and to critically evaluate them as they applied them to their own repository and stakeholders. Participants considered the current status of information exposure in their organisations and how this could be improved using the guidelines. Through this process, participants provided valuable feedback on how useful, relevant, and realistic the guidelines are, directly shaping the future iterations of the guidelines.

This FAIR Implementation Story outlines the specific aims and actions of Graz University of Technology in relation to their participation in the support action.



■ ■ Introduction:

The focus of this support action was to align our repository's metadata disclosure practices with the FAIR-IMPACT guidelines, emphasising transparency, trustworthiness and interoperability. Our goal was to improve the discoverability and contextual richness of the digital assets in the Graz University of Technology repository. This engagement allowed us to delve deeply into the guidelines, particularly regarding metadata practices at the organisational level, and to assess the applicability to our current processes. Through active participation, we aimed to identify practical improvements to our metadata disclosure policies and assess areas where our repository could be improved for greater accessibility and usability. Ultimately, we wanted to use this experience to build trust in our repository's assets and promote sustainable digital stewardship, in line with our commitment to transparency and high-quality digital management practices.

■ ■ Approach taken:

During the support programme we carried out several key activities to improve the quality and usability of our repository, working to integrate recommended guidelines for repository trustworthiness and metadata disclosure. This alignment focused on ensuring that our repository met standards and became a trusted resource within our institution. We also improved our metadata disclosure by implementing new processes at both organisational and object level. This enhancement aimed to improve the discoverability of our repository's resources, making it easier for users to find and access valuable information. We have also developed a structured approach to disseminating best practice. This includes organising regular training sessions, developing documentation, and producing workshop materials for internal use. By the end of the support programme, we had established a more robust and reliable repository, with improved metadata presentation and discoverability. The repository now meets higher standards of trustworthiness, making it a more valuable resource for both researchers and practitioners in our field.

■ ■ Challenges encountered and addressed:

One of the key challenges was aligning our repository's existing metadata structure with the standards recommended by the support programme. This required significant restructuring and coordination with our technical team, as the original metadata structure lacked the granularity needed to improve discoverability.

Implementing the new policies required additional technical and human resources, which were limited. Training staff and adapting the repository infrastructure took time and effort, and we struggled to dedicate sufficient team resources without disrupting regular operations. Promoting the adoption of new repository practices among researchers was a challenge, as many were unfamiliar with the changes and reluctant to adapt to the updated standards.

■ ■ Impact:

As a result of our participation in the support action, our team has developed a greater focus on metadata quality and structure. This shift has led to a more rigorous approach to metadata management as well as increased awareness for standards required for optimal discoverability of the repository. We have introduced metadata audits



and established a review process to ensure ongoing compliance with best practice. This is expected to significantly improve the quality of our repository over time. These audits focus on best practice in repository management and have helped to build a culture of continuous learning around repository trustworthiness. The structured approach to knowledge sharing that we have adopted as part of this programme sets a precedent for future projects, ensuring that expertise is shared consistently. Although some changes are still in progress, we expect our work to influence wider institutional practices around research data management and repository standards. Through our contributions to the projects OSTRails and Shared RDM Services & Infrastructure, the best practices we have implemented are likely to influence future repository initiatives.

■ ■ Key messages:

Building trust depends on cultivating transparency which is essential to improving any repository. Periodic review of past decisions is equally important; it allows us to adapt to evolving best practices and ensures that our repositories remain both current and trustworthy.





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