



# KEEP IT SIMPLE, STUPID

**Designing a stripped down DMP template**

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# DMPS IN CANADA - NOW REQUIRED

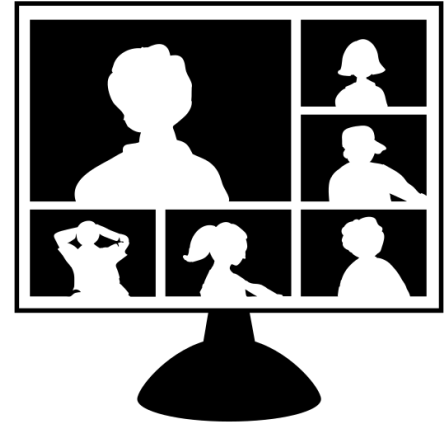
- After many (many) years of anticipation Canada's federal funding agencies launched their policy on Research Data Management
- Requirements include requiring researchers to create data management plans as a condition of being funded for research involving data collection
- DMPs will be required for selected funding applications starting in blah

Panic!



# RDM WORKING AND DISCUSSION GROUP

- Mandate: develop a research data management strategy for the campus, discuss / deal with other data management issues
- Membership:
  - Librarians (Liz and Kristi)
  - Senior library administrator
  - Director, Research Ethics Office
  - Director, Research Services
  - Senior manager from Technology Services
  - Faculty representative: Associate VP of Research
  - Faculty representative: data champion
  - President's special advisor on data strategy



# DMP ASSISTANT

- Platform for writing DMPS, based on code from the Digital Curation Centre tool, and uses the DMP Roadmap codebase developed by DCC and the University of California.
- In essence a form which asks the user questions about their data and how they will handle it and tries to guide them to “good” answers
- Allows administrators to develop custom templates to guide creation of a DMP, also provides a default template
- Developed with Canadian policy and funding requirements in mind



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## Welcome to DMP Assistant.

The **DMP Assistant** is a national, online, bilingual data management planning tool developed by the **Digital Research Alliance of Canada (the Alliance)** in collaboration with host institution **University of Alberta** to assist researchers in preparing **data management plans (DMPs)**. This tool is freely available to all researchers, and develops a DMP through a series of key data management questions, supported by best-practice guidance and examples.

DMPs are one of the foundations of good research data management (RDM), an international best practice, and increasingly required by institutions and funders, including the Canadian Tri-Agencies as outlined in their Research Data Management Policy.

### Getting started:

- [Brief Guide – Data Management Plans](#)
- [Brief Guide – Create an Effective Data Management Plan](#)
- [Primer – Data Management Plan](#)
- [How to Manage Your Data](#)
- [Tutorial Videos:](#)
  - [Introduction to Data Management Plans \(DMPs\)](#)
  - [Introduction to DMP Assistant](#)

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\* **Email**

\* **Password**

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# PATH TO ADOPTION

- Initial confusion as to what DMP Assistant was, whether it was official
- Path towards seeing it as a useful tool at our institution was complex – desire for an ideal solution that would “just work” and somehow pull required information from other sources
  - Yes, that would be nice...
- Once DMP Assistant was explained, demonstrated, and debated, campus RDM working group was excited by the possibilities but unhappy with the complexity

DEFAULT TEMPLATE  
- 7 SECTIONS AND  
20 QUESTIONS



Data Collection (3)



Documentation and Metadata (3)



Storage and Backup (3)



Preservation (2)



Sharing and Reuse (3)



Responsibilities and Resources (3)



Ethics and Legal Compliance (3)

# IDENTIFIED ISSUES

- Initial formal and informal consultations included:
  - Faculty representatives (including worried Associate Dean of Research)
  - Research officers (grant support)
  - Ethics representatives
  - Technical / IT support
- Concerns varied, but essentially - fear high, knowledge low
  - Don't understand RDM jargon
  - Don't know available options at Western and beyond
  - Annoyed at length of form and redundant questions
  - Don't know what a "good" answer looks like (tend to overexplain, which increases annoyance with length)



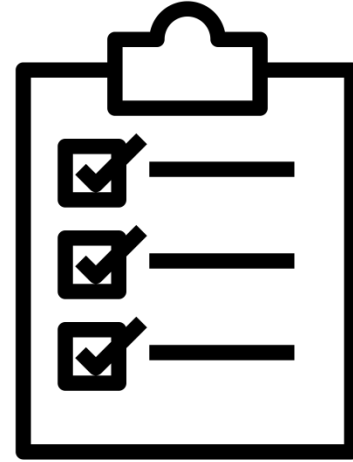
## TENSIONS AND SHARED GOALS

- As data / RDM librarians we want our users to write beautiful complete data management plans, manage their data well, standardize their metadata, and place data in a repository when done
- Research officers and faculty want to make sure requirements don't get in the way of funding or slow down their ability to complete research
- Ethics officers want to make sure requirements and practices are compliant with their current recommendations
- I.T. wants researchers to use the recommended tools they provide and stop making life difficult by using 20 other different things instead



# APPROACH

- Guide users to options - advanced users can write their own answers, less advanced will see checkboxes
- Figure out what information is essential - why are the questions being asked?
- Plain language context right there on the page, with additional guidance available
- Reduce number of questions and number of sections
- If providing a menu is not an option give examples.
- Test and retest with users!



Created by Pongpim Dree  
With the team Project

# DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Initial consultations - formal and informal - with potential users gathered from our RDM working group, attendees at RDM workshops, anyone who asked for help writing a DMP

Demonstrated first version of adapted form next to original for a group of research officers i.e. people who help faculty answer difficult grant-related questions

Reaction: “when can we start using it?”

Had faculty member / data champion member of working group recruit additional testers who used the revised template to create DMPS for actual projects and comment on anything they found notable or unclear

## SIMPLE TEMPLATE 2.0

5 sections, 17 questions.  
May further combine  
section 4 and 5 –  
feedback says these are  
still confusing.

Data Collection (5)

Documentation and Metadata (3)

Data Storage and Backup (3)

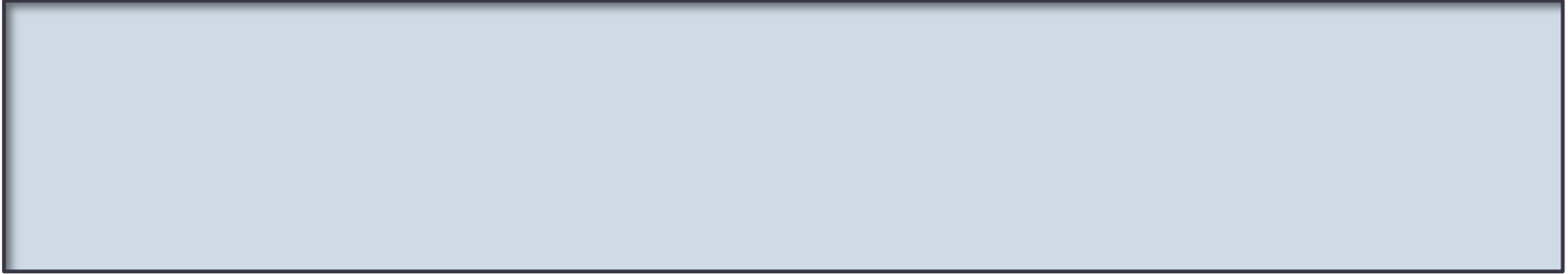
Preservation (3)

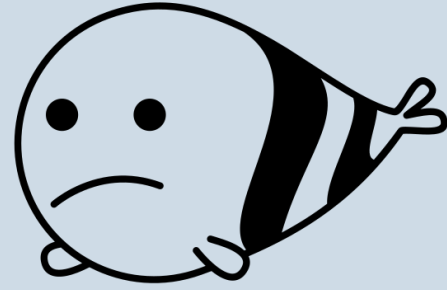
Sharing and Reuse (3)

# SIMPLIFICATION

## ORIGINAL SPACE QUESTION

What are the anticipated storage requirements for your project, in terms of storage space (in megabytes, gigabytes, terabytes, etc.) ?





“I’M NOT SURE WHAT A GIGABYTE IS.”

## REVISED SPACE QUESTION

How much data storage space do you anticipate needing for the data you will collect?

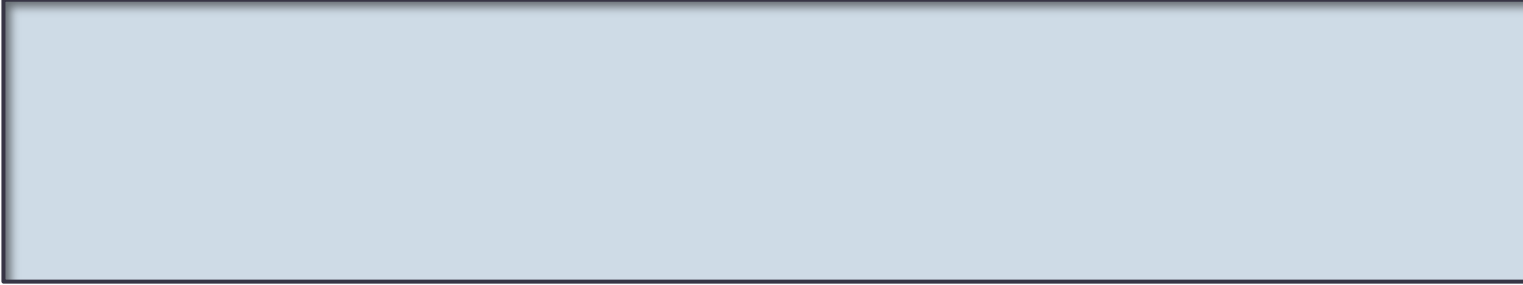
- ☒ Small: Up to 1 TB. Choose this if you do not anticipate storage being a problem.
- ☐ Medium: 1 TB – 10 TB
- ☐ Large or other. If you anticipate requiring more than 10 TB or otherwise do not fit the above categories please describe your storage requirements.

### Guidance

If you normally can store your research on a network drive without requesting extra storage, select "Up to 1 TB". Select "Medium" if ...

## ORIGINAL FORMAT QUESTION

What file formats will your data be collected in? Will these formats allow for data re-use, sharing and long-term access to the data?





# REVISED QUESTION

**What file formats will your data be collected and saved in?**

- ☐ Statistical data files e.g. SPSS, SAS, Stata, R, NVivo
- ☐ Spreadsheets e.g. Excel or Google Sheets
- ☐ Text data e.g. .txt text files, .csv comma separated values, etc
- ☐ Documents e.g. MS Word, Google Docs
- ☐ Image files e.g. tiff, jpeg
- ☐ Stored in a database e.g. REDCap (Specify below)
- ☐ Instrument-specific format (specify below)
- ☐ Other (Please specify)

## ORIGINAL QUESTION: STORAGE LOCATION

How and where will your data be stored and backed up during your research project?

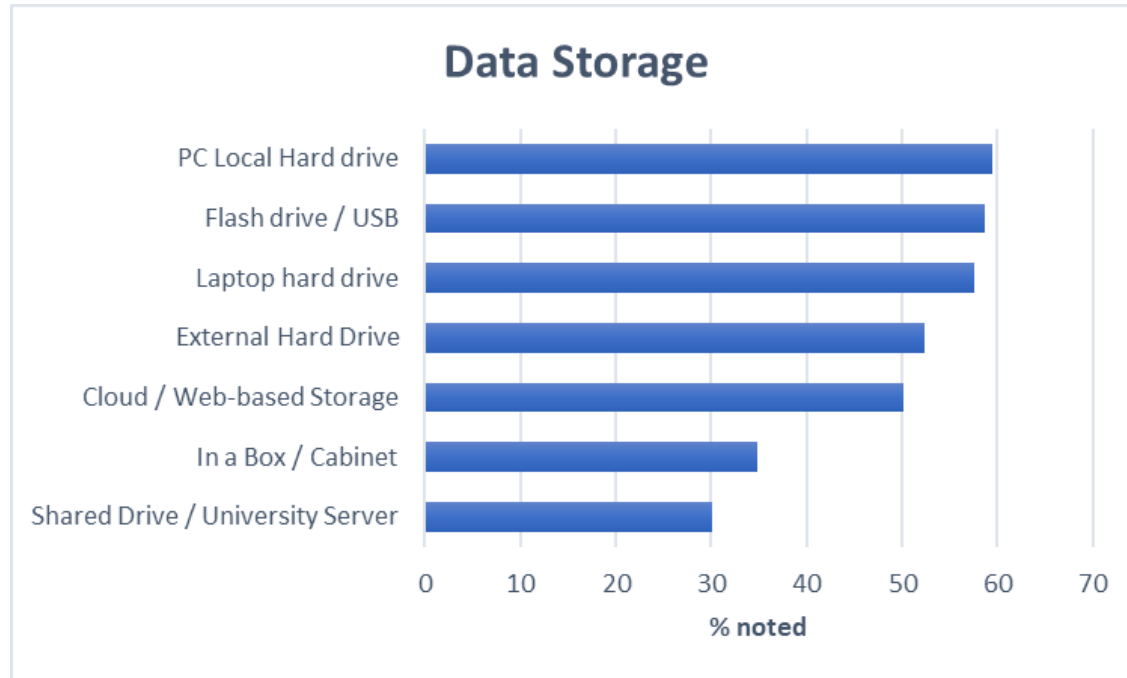


### **Guidance**

Data may be stored using optical or magnetic media, which can be removable (e.g. DVD and USB drives), fixed (e.g. desktop or laptop hard drives), or networked

# RDM SURVEY FINDINGS – DATA STORAGE

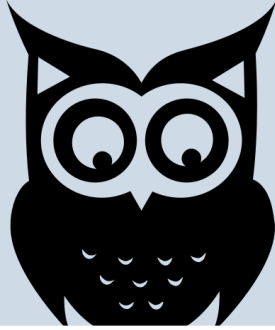
Respondents noted using the following storage methods:



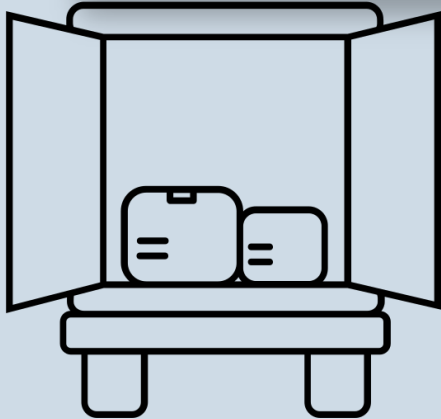
## NEW QUESTION

**How and where will your data be stored and backed up during your research project?**

- ☐ Stored and backed up through OWL, Teams, OneDrive, WTS-provided network / mapped drives, or unit/departmental server
- ☐ Other Western-provided service e.g. institutional RedCAP (Please explain below)
- ☐ Stored through Compute Canada / Digital Research Alliance of Canada, SHARCNET, or other national or provincial service (please explain below)
- ☐ External shared service e.g. Dropbox, Google Drive (please specify)
- ☐ Local hard drive, disk or memory stick (please describe and explain how data will be kept secure)
- ☐ Other (please describe and explain how data will be kept secure)



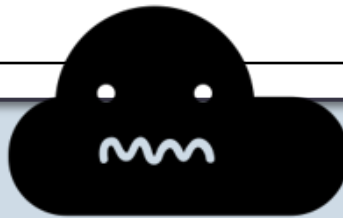
“HOW IS LONG TERM PRESERVATION DIFFERENT FROM SIMPLY STORING YOUR DATA?”



# DOCUMENTATION QUESTION

**Metadata standards** vary across disciplines, but generally state who created the data and when, how the data were created, their quality, accuracy, and precision, as well as **other features necessary to facilitate data discovery, understanding and reuse**. Any restrictions on use of the data must be explained in the metadata, along with information on how to obtain approved access to the data, where possible.

**What documentation will be needed for the data to be read and interpreted correctly in the future?**



## “FEATURES TO FACILITATE DISCOVERY, UNDERSTANDING AND RE-USE”

- This is a complex concept even for experts.
- It's a topic of research and discussion, something we attend conference sessions on, something debated endlessly at the working groups governing different data archives I sit on.
- Do we really expect a random user who hasn't had any of this specialized training to sit down and type out a coherent answer?
- Even if they've attended a library RDM workshop at some point and there's a nice paragraph of explanation in front of them?

## NEW QUESTION WITH EXAMPLE

What documentation will you create so this data may be read and interpreted correctly in the future after the project ends? Describe **in general terms** the **types of documents** you will create and the sorts of information you will track; **it is not necessary to list every document.**

### Example

Documentation will include a master study document that will capture information about how the data is collected, describe data cleaning procedures, and explain major changes made to study data files. Each survey file will be saved with a copy of the original questionnaire and a codebook that describes how the survey responses are coded. The codebook will also include a header file that explains which syntax files were used to modify and analyze the related survey document. Syntax files will include detailed comments.



# ETHICAL QUESTIONS

If applicable, what strategies will you undertake to address secondary uses of sensitive data?

How will you manage legal, ethical, and intellectual property issues?

## Guidance

The consent statement may identify certain conditions clarifying the uses of the data by other researchers. For example, it may stipulate that the data will only be shared for non-profit research purposes or that the data will not be linked with personally identified data from other sources.



“MY PARTICIPANTS ARE FRUIT FLIES”



“RESEARCHERS WHO LIMIT ACCESS TO  
THEIR RAW DATA SHOULD BE FLOGGED.”

Questions or suggestions? Contact:  
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Icons from The Noun Project, <https://thenounproject.com/>

- Slide 2, Panic, Cédric Villain
- Slide 3, Online Meeting, Dennis Chatham
- Slide 9, Clipboard, Penguin Draw
- Slide 14, Confused Stripe, Xinh Studio
- Slide 16, Confused Dog, Ariel Kotzer
- Slide 21, Owl, emel çelik; Storage, Hat-Tech; Recycled Papers, Llisole
- Slide 22, Confused Cloud, Akshar Pathak
- Slide 26, Flies, Lars Meiertoberens
- Slide 27, Strong Whip, Nathaniel Smith