

Keeping Research Data Alive

Sustaining Digital Scholarship

People

• Researcher-Led

The SDS service was developed in response to researcher need, specifically for digital humanities projects, scoped by a 1-year research project in 2013, called DHARMA (Digital Humanities Archives for Research Materials). Researchers continue to guide the project through membership of a governance board.

• User-Led

Our friendly, helpful, consultative team place our users (researchers) at the heart of our service. We help them to navigate the complex research data management (RDM) landscape at the University of Oxford, and recommend the best service for their research. This is not always SDS.

• Connected and Collaborative

Our team are integrated within the wider research data management structures and communities at the University, and we work together to offer the best support to our users.



Figure 1: SDS connects to a range of services, projects and staff working with research data at Oxford



Figure 2: The SDS team organised a data speed dating event for Valentine's day, where researchers were able to meet all the RDM providers in Oxford under one roof

Meet the team



Catherine Conisbee
Project Officer



Damon Strange
Project Manager



Dr Mark McKerracher
Product Manager and Migrations Lead



Dr Megan Gooch
Head of the Centre for Digital Scholarship and Digital Humanities Research Support

Figure 3: The individuals that make up the SDS team

Process

• Research Projects Suitability Assessments

We devised seven criteria to assess whether a research project is suitable for migration to the SDS platform. See Figure 4 for an example of how we assessed three projects.

• Researcher Consultations

We offer free advice to researchers looking to store research data for existing or for new projects. We can offer quotations for hosting and SDS data management as part of the grant proposal process. Our transparent pricing structures and competitive prices are popular with researchers and research facilitators.

• Data Migration Management

We use a Microsoft Planner (Kanban Board) to manage our project migrations pipeline. A project is added at initial consultation, and remains on our board until it is migrated or the researcher finds an alternative solution. This helps us track delays in the migration process caused by the funding application process or by our researchers' busy schedules.

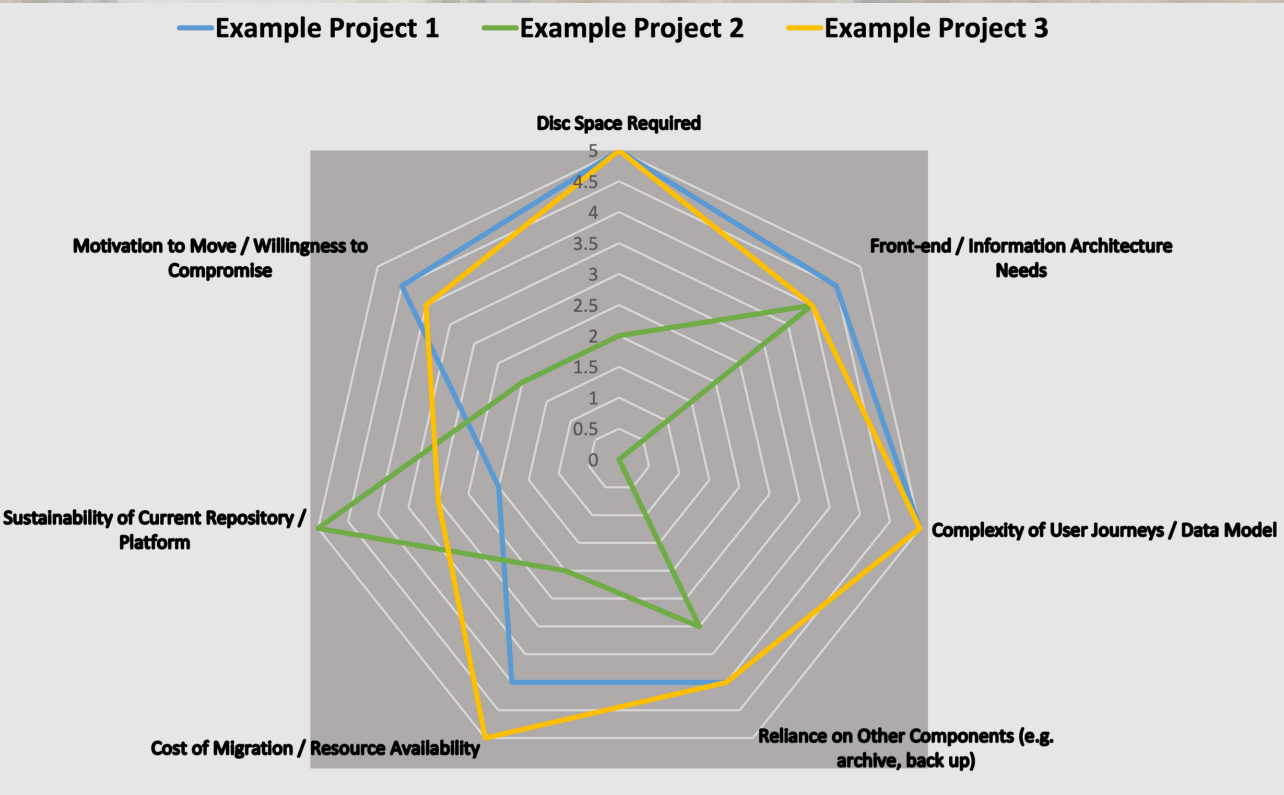


Figure 4: A spider diagram used to scope project suitability against seven criteria

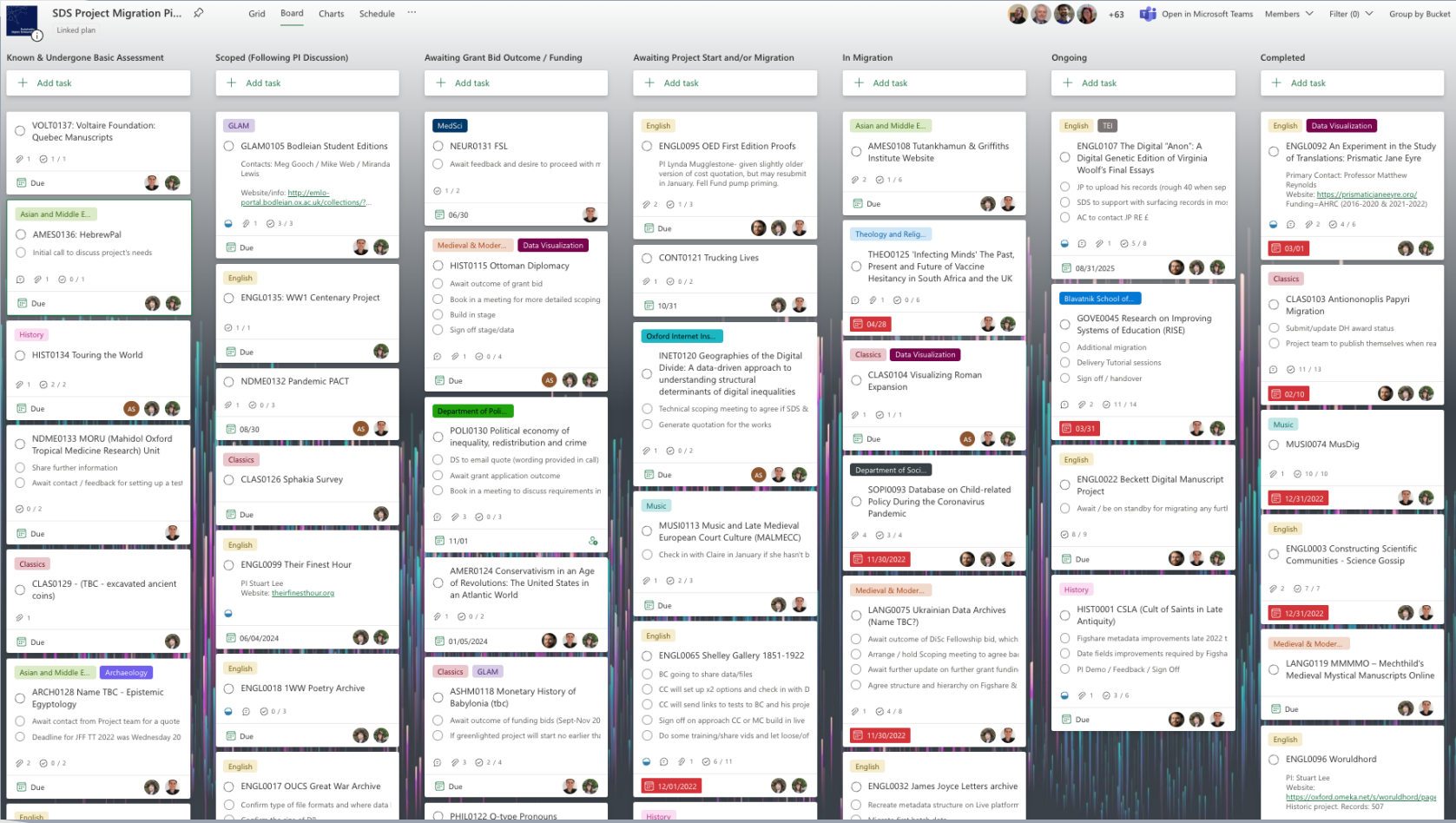


Figure 5: Our planner board helps us track hundreds of projects at different stages in the migration pipeline

Technology

• Choosing our technical solution

We considered building a bespoke solution and combining various open source components (such as Omeka) in the early phase of seeking a solution. However, there were costs and risks associated with ongoing reliance on in-house technical expertise (and staff costs). The benefits of using an off the shelf product were clear. No technical solution is able to cater for all research projects, due to their complexity, but we aim to serve 80% of projects we encounter. Many of our researchers come to us with bespoke databases and projects that now lack funding for a technical specialist.

• Software as a Service (SaaS)

We use Figshare for Institutions in a different way from many Universities, who use the product as their institutional repository. We use the 'groups' function to curate, share and make digital humanities research project data discoverable. We've used use bulk migration tools to create or upload over 50,000 records since February 2021.

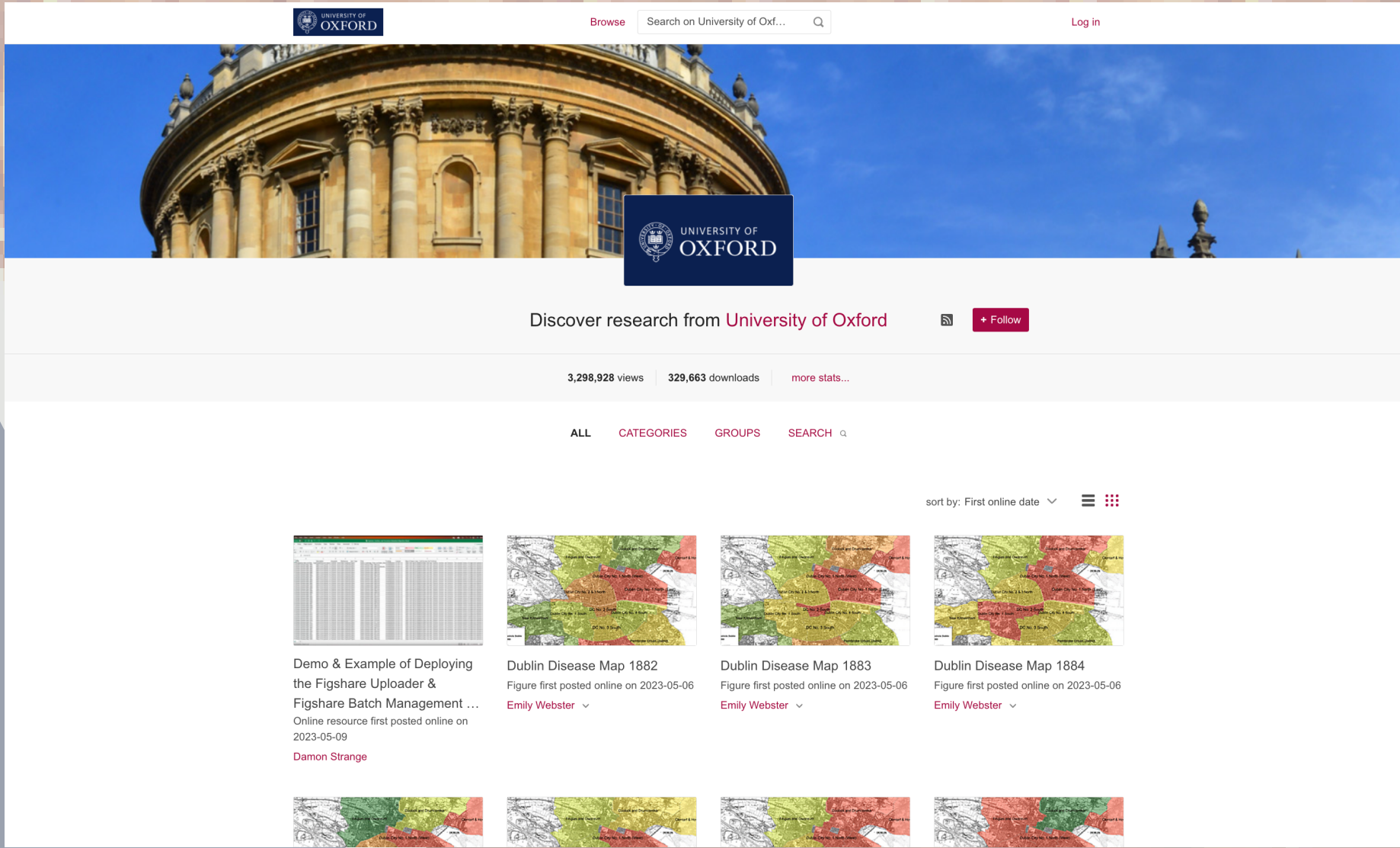


Figure 6: Our Figshare for Institutions landing page



About the authors:

Dr Megan Gooch is the Head of the Centre for Digital Scholarship and Digital Humanities Research Support at the University of Oxford. She plays a pivotal role in leading the development and realisation of the long-term vision and strategy for digital scholarship at the University.

Damon Strange currently works as the Project Manager for the Sustainable Digital Scholarship Service. A freelance Programme and Project Management consultant, with a particular specialism in Research Data Management. For further info visit; www.exnihiloconsulting.co.uk

