Art and Research Data Management Plan Template

centre[4]
art + research

Abstract

This template is designed for projects that involve art and research. This template was created to assist different groups of people (i.e. artists, academic researchers, social service workers, community organizers, community workers) involved in projects in which art and research intersect. The plan aims to be accessible as a tool for working collaboratively in art and research projects where data can be understood in many different ways and where interdisciplinary collaboration creates specific needs for structure, agreements and documentation.

The template includes both guidelines for storing, preserving, and sharing access to artistic products generated through research and guidelines for decision making around ownership, access, and possession of artistic processes and artistic products generated for/ through research.

Administrative Details

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Art and Research Data Management Plan Template

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Throughout your partnership, you will likely be generating or creating some sort of “data.” As a general understanding of data - if you can use it as a building block to produce new knowledge or understanding, it could qualify as research data. We also understand that the word “data” may not resonate with you or what you intend to collect during your project. Instead of using the word “data,” for example, you might more closely identify with something like “evidence,” or “stories.” Throughout this document, we use the word “data” - but please feel free to change this word to something that fits better for your partnership and your project. You can articulate which terminology best suits your project in the space below.

To refer to “data,” we will be using the word _____

Once you’ve agreed upon how you will be referring to your data, it is important to plan for how this data will be managed. To ensure that data is managed in a safe and ethical way, it is important to discuss and come to an agreement about:

1) The collection and organization of this data;
2) How the collection of data will be documented;
3) Where and how the data will be stored and making sure we don’t lose it;
4) How the data will be maintained once the project has reached completion;
5) How the data will be shared and where it will be used;
6) Who is responsible for taking care of the data; and
7) How you intend to keep the data safe and how we will meet our ethical responsibilities.

The question prompts below are intended to be helpful for facilitating discussion about how the data for your project will be managed. You are welcome to use the spaces provided to record the decisions that have been collectively made about the management of data for your project.

At the end of this document, there are spaces for each partner to sign in agreement to this data management plan.

Data Collection

What counts as “data” may be interpreted differently by each partner. These differences in understanding are dependent on a variety of factors, such as disciplinary differences or varied expectations about what the project outputs may be.

The following example may help to highlight these potential differences more clearly. If a collaborative project between social scientists, artists, and community participants includes an arts-based focus group component in which participants create collage art, there are multiple ways in which “data” could be conceptualized. Depending on who is determining what counts as

data, as well as what the project is intended to achieve, some examples of “data” in this scenario might include: (1) transcripts of the conversations that occur while participants are creating their collage art, (2) the pieces of collage art themselves, (3) the observations that are made of participants as they are creating their collage art (4) photo documentation of the process of creating the collages, and/or (5) hand-written reflections from a group discussion after the collage-making. This example showcases the many different ways that data might be understood and interpreted, and points to the need to define what the “data” will be before embarking on the project together.

To ensure that all partners have a shared understanding of what the data is, as well as how it will be organized, please reflect upon the following questions and record your answers in the spaces provided.

Data Collection	
What is the “data” in this project? What will we gather?	
Is there anything we are reusing? (i.e. archival photos, another artist’s field recordings, samples from films, historic oral histories, maps…).	
How will we organize what we gather so that we can all find it and know where things are? This includes a variety of things to organize from the very practical (i.e. what will our folder structures look like? How will we name files? What file formats do we use?) to the very conceptual (i.e. how do we make sure our organization systems are known and understood by everyone?)	

Documentation and Metadata

The ways that you document your data collection processes will be helpful for ensuring that those involved in the partnership are all familiar with the contextual information about your project. Metadata for collaborative arts-based and arts-informed might include[1]:

1) Basic information about your project, such as the title of the project and the name of the funder,
2) Your research project design, such as the the background information, research questions, and theoretical framework, and
3) The project methodology, which might include interview guides, transcription processes, and a description of the artistic processes and materials.

For projects that include the creation of artwork, metadata might also include names of the artists, the dates that certain works were created, the equipment that might be used for creating or documenting these artworks, and the subject matter of the art that was created.

Additionally, in some cases, documentation of the research process and the decisions that we've made together is also considered data. You may want to keep this in mind as you think through your strategies for documentation and metadata.

Documentation and Metadata	
How and where will we document our process? For example, you may choose to have a shared notebook or online Google Document that keeps track of the project metadata.	
How will we keep track of the decisions that we have made together? This might include, for example, written minutes or recordings of partnership meetings.	
Who is responsible for making sure that we document our process? Aspects of process that you may want to consider documenting could include basic	

[1] Lévesque, M. & Doiron, J. (2021). Data management plan template: Arts-based research. *Zenodo*. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4571671

project information, research design, and methodology.	

Storage and Backup

Where and how you store your data is an essential part of keeping data safe. In many cases, formal ethics processes (such as ethics applications through the McMaster Research Ethics Board, for example) will require that you outline how you intend to keep your data protected.

If some of the data that you collect will be digital (such as photographs of the collages created in a collage workshop, for example, or typed up transcripts of interviews), you may want to think about keeping these files in a place that is accessible to certain partners but is still password protected. If some of the data that you collect will be physical, such as paintings or sculptures, you may want to consider who will be storing these physical works and where.

Storage and Backup	
Where will we store what we collect, and how will we keep it safe? (Think about both physical and digital forms of data) For physical forms of data, this might include a storage space in an office or home of one of the project partners. For digital forms of data, this could be a data repository or a thumbdrive.	
Who will have access to what we collect?	
Our interviews, focus groups, and/or events often only happen once. How do we make sure we don't lose what we collect?	

Maintenance

The project that you are working on will eventually come to an end, and it is wise to decide upon what will happen with the data from your project once it has reached completion. Some

examples of this might include deletion of all data following a certain timeframe, or redistributing the physical data back to the participants who created it.

Maintenance	
Where will everything we collect go when the project is done?	

Sharing, Ownership, and Reuse

Once it is determined how the data will be managed, it is also important to create a shared understanding of who owns that data, as well as how that data can be shared. In the example provided earlier in this document about the project that involves collage art, it may be agreed upon, that the data in the collage arts-based focus group are the pieces of collage art, but that the participants are the owners of that data. Conversations may then evolve around participant choice to share their artwork, or how that artwork might otherwise be shared.

From an additional data angle, however, in addition to the pieces of collage art, the transcribed recordings of participant answers in response to questions asked by researchers during the collage making process might also be data for that project. It is important to remember that data can take many different shapes, and that there might be multiple sources of data for any given project. Conversations may need to be had about how pieces of those transcripts could be shared, such as about the required deidentification of transcribed quotes and through which avenues those deidentified quotes can be shared.

It may also be valuable to consider if you would like what is created throughout this partnership to contribute to the common good. If shared publicly, for example, the narratives that emerge in the collage making workshop might have the potential to alter perceptions about a particular group of people, neighbourhood, or idea. Collaborating on what might need to be done to share this work publicly is also an important part of the sharing, use, and reuse conversation.

The question prompts and spaces below might be helpful for facilitating discussion about data and art ownership and sharing. You are welcome to use the spaces to record the decisions that have been made about your project.

Sharing and Reuse	
What outputs will we have? These outputs could be artistic, interview quotes, etc.	
Who owns those outputs? (For example, who owns the artistic outputs or the interview quotes?)	
What will we share?	
Where will we share it?	
How will we share it?	
With whom will we share it?	
How do we make sure that what we've gathered is accessible to the people we worked with?	
What can be made entirely public so that other artists or researchers could use? (For example, methodologies, photos, audio clips) Something to consider in the context of entirely public data could be Creative Commons licenses[2].	
Who has a say in granting access to what we've collected to other people?	

Responsibilities and Resources

Deciding upon who will be responsible for storing your project data and keeping it safe is a vital part of your data management plan. This decision may be dependent on resources, such as access to different data security systems and data management software. Some institutions, for

[2] https://creativecommons.org/share-your-work/

example, provide access to certain data management technologies and it therefore might make the most sense for you and your partnership to use what is already available to you. Alternately, you might need to apply for additional funding to ensure that you have some sort of reliable data management system.

Questions about who is responsible for what are complicated because research data management is a shared responsibility: artist-researchers might have responsibility, a delegate in a community organization, or a community leader. There may also be other people involved who are sharing the responsibility: a project coordinator, a student work-study, and more. It will be important to consider what is needed to keep everything tidy, organized, maintained, and safe.

For example, the community participants in the example research project involving collage, may be part of an organized community group or program. The community participants might be able to take the original collages home with them, while the leader of the organized community group might be responsible for taking photos of the collages and storing them in a digital format, as well as collecting hand-written participant reflections about how the collaging experience went. It is important that there is a shared responsibility amongst the research team in terms of keeping the project and project data organized and kept safe. .

If the data that you collect is physical, such as the collages created by research participants, decisions made about the storage of project data may be dependent on different types of resources. You might need to consider who has the space to store and keep the collages safe for a prolonged period of time, for example, or think about how members of the research team might access that physical data if the person storing it is not available at the time it's needed.

Responsibilities and Resources	
Who will be responsible for the care and maintenance of this information?	
Who will be responsible if that person or people need to step back for whatever reason?	
What will we need in terms of resources for this? (e.g., extra hard drives, training for team members, digitization, etc.)	
Do we need to apply for any additional funds or allocate someone's time towards this?	

Ethics and Legal Compliance

Management of data for research projects is an ethical - and sometimes legal - responsibility. The data that you collect for this project will need to be kept safe and secure. Oftentimes, for research projects that are associated with an academic institution, you will need to gain approvals from the institutional research ethics board. Having upfront conversations about the safekeeping and storage of data may help you to prepare for these more formalized ethics approval processes.

Ethics and Legal Compliance	
How will we keep this information safe?	
How will we ensure we are meeting our responsibilities to each other and that everyone is on the same page?	
If your research is sensitive, how will you make sure it is secure and accessible only to approved people?	

Data Management Agreement

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Once you have worked through the Data Management Plan together, you are welcome to formally agree to what you have discussed and decided upon in your partnership by signing this Data Management Agreement.

I, the undersigned, understand and agree to the Data Management Plan that has been created for the partnership project titled "_____." I agree to adhere to this Data Management Plan to the best of my abilities.

_____ _____

Signature of Partner A Date of Signature

_____

Printed Name of Partner A

_____ _____

Signature of Partner B Date of Signature

_____

Printed Name of Partner B

_____ _____

Signature of Partner C Date of Signature

_____

Printed Name of Partner C