The Value of TDR Certification: A Survey of CoreTrustSeal Certified Repositories

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I conduct research in the areas of digital preservation, digital curation, and data reuse (including open data), focusing on social and ethical barriers that limit or prevent the preservation, sharing, and reuse of digital information.
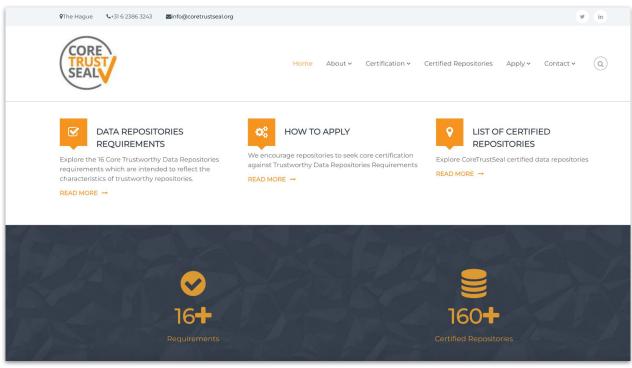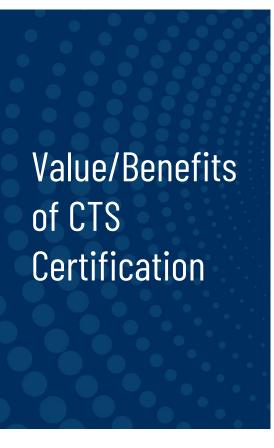
Overview

- Background: CoreTrustSeal
- Research Questions
- Research Methods: Survey
- Analysis Framework
- Selected Findings
- Future Directions

Background

CTS: CoreTrustSeal

Value/Benefits of CTS Certification

- Internal
  - Provides a benchmark for comparison
  - Determine repository strengths & weaknesses
- External
  - Minimally invasive external review
  - Improve quality & transparency of processes
  - Increase awareness of, and compliance with, established standards
- Some funders now stipulate that the data they fund must be deposited in a trustworthy repository

https://www.coretrustseal.org/why-certification/

Research Questions

How do staff members from CoreTrustSeal certified repositories characterize the primary value of TDR certification?

Research Methods

Survey of CTS Members

- 171 repositories surveyed

- Response rate: 53.98%

- 86 responses to the question presented here (response rate: 50.29%)

"In your opinion, what is the primary value of trustworthy repository certification?"

Research Methods

Analysis: Qualitative Coding

- Deductive & inductive coding (Hennink, et al., 2019)

- 3-cycle coding approach (Babbie, 2010; Miles et al., 2014; McDonald et al., 2019; Saldaña, 2016)
  - First round: broad categories (parent codes)
    - Overall Unweighted Kappa 0.96
  - Second round: sub-categories (child codes)
    - Overall Unweighted Kappa 0.67
- Third round: axial coding, done by a single researcher
- Using: descriptive, values & evaluation codes (Saldaña, 2016)

Research Methods

Qualitative Analysis

- Analysis Framework:
  - **Internal Benefits**
  - **External Benefits**
  - Ambivalence
  - Costs/Negative Attitudes

Selected Findings

Internal & External Benefits

Benefits

Internal

- Improve processes

- Documentation

- Shared understanding

Improve Processes

"**improving our activities and workflow** in the archive. We have also **identified gaps that need to be improved** for the goal of long-term data archiving."

-Respondent 17

Documentation

"**Forcing the repository to document** its services/work through written procedures."

–Respondent 31

Shared Understanding

"The primary value is an internal one. It provides you with a means to f**urther professionalise the organization**."

–Respondent 85

Benefits

- **<u>External</u>**
- Appeal to users
- Communication with funders
- Communication with stakeholders

Appeal to Users

"In the area of research data, depositors need to decide **where to deposit their data** and they _and their funders_ need to know whether the repository researchers have decided on is a good choice."

–Respondent 37

Communication with Funders

"I assume that some kind of certification will be [in] demand in the future for being a repository. Can be **used when seeking external project funding**."

–Respondent 31

Communication with Stakeholders

"It is important to get a certification that **demonstrates** that a repository operates following best practices and standards that have been endorsed by a global community. This way, **stakeholders can make an informed decision** if a repository meets their expectations."

–Respondent 39

"Guarantee [the] long-term preservation of data."
-Respondent 42

Research Questions

How do respondents characterize the primary value of TDR certification?

- Internal & external benefits

- Impetus to improve & document processes

- A reliable & trustworthy means of communication about the repository with external stakeholders – *including & especially funders*

Outstanding Questions

& directions for future research

- Process vs. Stamp
- Funding paradox
- Aspirational vs. practical benefits
- Hyperbole vs. realism

Selected Publications

TDR Certification

[journal article] Frank, R. D. (2024). Constructing risk in trustworthy digital repositories. Journal of Documentation. https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-08-2023-0157 Available Open Access: https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/handle/2027.42/194298

[journal article] Frank, R. D., & Rothfritz, L. (2023). Designated Community: Uncertainty and Risk. Journal of Documentation, 79(4), 880–897. https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-07-2022-0161. Open Access: https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_infosciepubs/467/

[peer-reviewed conference paper] Frank, R. D., & Wylie, J. (2023). Audit Team Communication and Risk in Trustworthy Digital Repository Certification. Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology, 60(1), 145–155. https://doi.org/10.1002/pra2.776. Open Access: https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_infosciepubs/474/

[peer-reviewed conference paper] Frank, R. D. (2023). Repository Staff Perspectives on the Benefits of Trustworthy Digital Repository Certification. In iPres 2023: Proceedings of the 20th International Conference on Digital Preservation. https://hdl.handle.net/2142/121102. Open Access: https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_infosciepubs/475/

[journal article] Frank, R. D. (2022). Risk in Trustworthy Digital Repository Audit and Certification. Archival Science 22, no. 1: 43–73. Open Access: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-021-09366-z.

[journal article] Frank, R. D. (2020). The Social Construction of Risk in Digital Preservation. Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology. 71:474-484. https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24247. Open Access: http://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/149147

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