

THE TOMBSTONE PROTOCOL

AN UNDERTAKING FOR UNFORTUNATE EVENTS

Alexander Ball

University of Bath

18 February 2020

15th International Digital Curation Conference, Dublin

PUBLICATION WORKFLOW (2015–2018)

Researcher provides basic metadata



Researcher gets DOI



Researcher puts DOI in paper, submits



Paper reviewed



Data uploaded



Paper accepted



Dataset curated



Paper published — DOI —> Data published



NAILS IN THE COFFIN

Researcher provides basic metadata



Researcher gets DOI



Researcher ~~puts DOI in paper~~, submits



Paper reviewed



Data uploaded



Paper accepted



Dataset curated



Paper published DOI → Data published



THE TOMBSTONE PROTOCOL

Scenarios:

DOI quoted *Data uploaded* *Data deposited* *Review complete*

✗

✗

✓

✗

✓

✓

✗

✓

✓

✓

✗

- Dataset published early in error
- Data withdrawn
- Retention period expired

THE TOMBSTONE PROTOCOL

For each scenario

- High level summary of approach to take
- Detailed steps
 - timescales
 - escalation procedures
 - non-availability notice ('epitaph')
 - settings for DataCite and University Research Portal

EXAMPLE

Scenario: DOI quoted, data uploaded and deposited, dataset stalled in review.

Summary: Complete publication process

1. Give depositor notice that dataset will be published in 3 weeks' time.
2. If no response, complete record.
3. Publish record, mint DOI.

EXAMPLE

Scenario: DOI quoted, data not uploaded, dataset not deposited.

Summary: Complete publication process or publish tombstone page

1. Contact depositor to encourage completion of record; allow 3 months.
2. If no response, give notice that a tombstone will be published in 3 weeks.
3. If no response, complete record and add non-availability notice.
4. Publish record, mint DOI, change DOI status to 'Registered'.
5. Hide record on University Research Portal.

IMPACT

- Adopted summer 2019
- 9 incomplete, unreferenced datasets cleared
- 2 incomplete submissions tombstoned
- 1 expired dataset tombstoned
- About 10 zombie datasets revived and published

QUESTIONS?

Alex Ball

Research Data Librarian (Systems)

The Library, University of Bath

2017 – present

ab318@bath.ac.uk

The Library



UNIVERSITY OF
BATH

