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From administrative burden to research excellence: getting researchers to take data management seriously

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Alexandra Stam

Swiss Centre of Expertise in the Social Sciences

# …and realize it's more than (data) housekeeping!

Agenda

- **The increasing importance of DM**
  - A changing research environment
  - The development of DMPs
  - From DM planning to DM practice
- **Data management at FORS**
  - FORS data service
  - Our DM vision and strategy
- **Pilot study**
  - Description of the pilot
  - Organisation of the pilot
  - Main foreseen outcomes
- **Conclusions**

The increasing importance of data management

A new research world

- Digital world
- Open Data movement
- Research ethics
- New research dynamics
- Increasing requirements from funders & journals
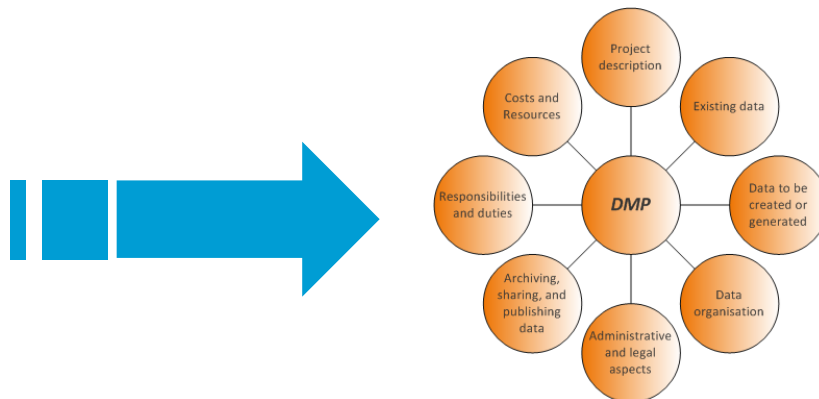
A strong emphasis on DMPs

+ They get researchers to think about DM

+ They get researchers to consider data sharing

+ They provide some kind of guidance

DMPs **are important**, but they have shortcomings

− They are often linked to the proposal

− They often focus on data sharing

− They neglect project management

− They tend to be very general

− They lack fine-tuned customization

− They are often static

Researchers tend to view DMPs an administrative burden

➤ The focus is too much on DM planning, and not enough on DM practice, including project management
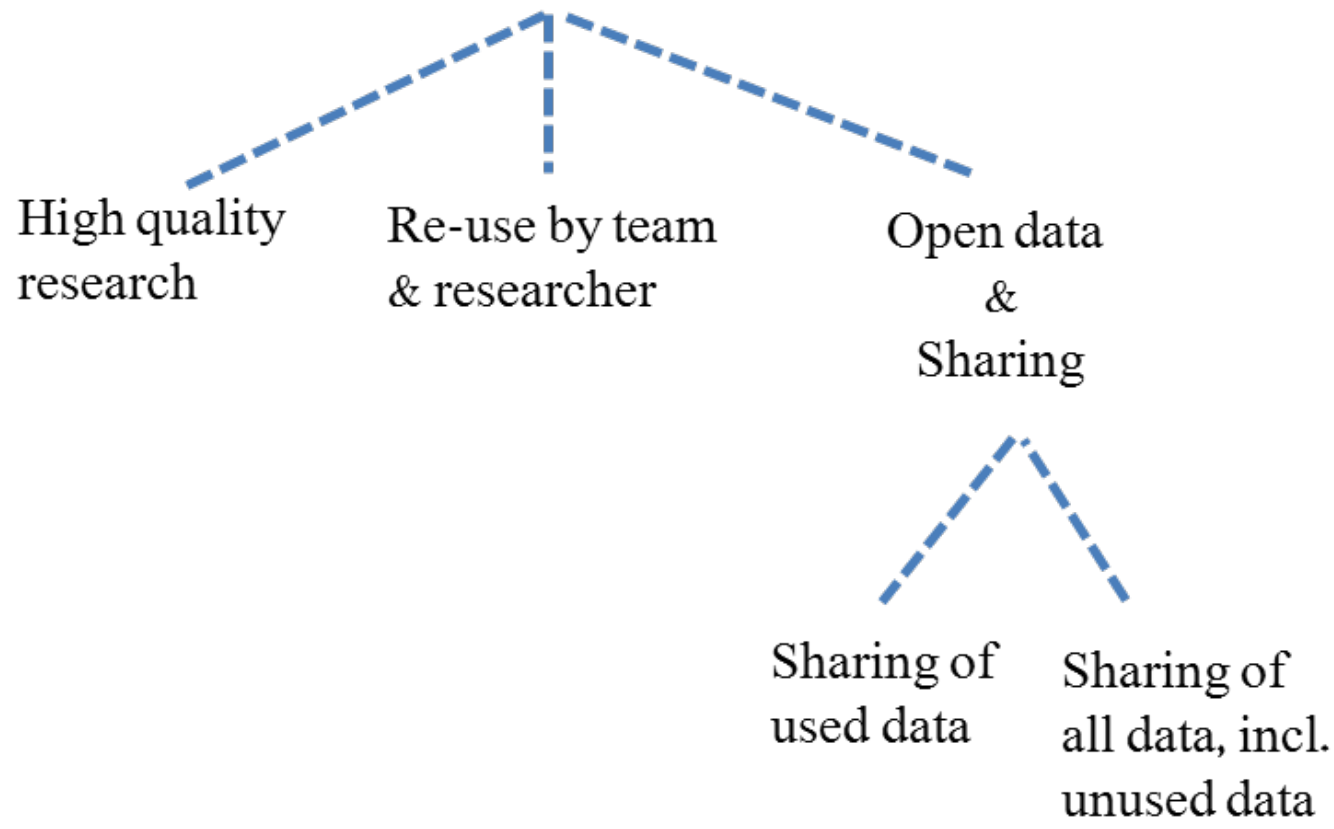
➤ There is the risk that researchers no longer take DM seriously

Researchers should see the value of data management for themselves first of all

Open data/ data sharing is only a subset of data management

Research data management

High quality research — Re-use by team & researcher — Open data & Sharing

Open data & Sharing:
- Sharing of used data
- Sharing of all data, incl. unused data

Data management at FORS

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- Methodological research
- Large-scale surveys
- Data and research information services (DARIS)

DARIS

FORSbase		
Data archiving	**Data access**	**Data management**
New requirements	Direct access to:	Training
Long-term preservation	**+** 500 data sets	Consulting
Enhance the value of research projects	**+** 11'000 project descriptions	Development of materials (i.e. guides)

Our data management vision and strategy

- «We want your data» perspective
- «We want you to have fun, and apply good practices» perspective

And then came the Swiss Federal Survey of Adolescents

- We got to run a large-scale survey
- We wanted to make it the best survey ever (with respect to DM)
- We failed to apply the recommendations we were teaching (lack of tools and in-depth practical guidance)

Our data management vision and strategy

Early days: Focus on DM from a data service point of view

- «We want your data» perspective
- «We want you to have fun, and apply good practices» perspective

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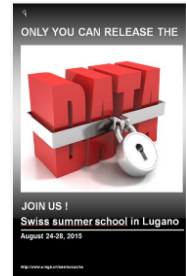
Current days: Focus on DM from a researcher's point of view

- «We want you to be able to apply good DM» perspective
- «We want you to see the value of DM for your work above all» perspective

It does not exclude data sharing or fun

The pilot

The pilot study

<u>Goal of the pilot</u>:

to better understand the needs and challenges faced by researchers with respect to applying good data management practices in the frame of their research. This will allow us to:

- engage with research specificities
- study how teams function and what DM practices they apply
- work out together with the teams solutions to specific problems they face

Target studies:

- Projects at different stages (pre-funding, just started, well started)
- Projects with different end-goals (sharing or not)
- Projects from different disciplines within the social sciences
- Projects generating different types of data
  - quantitative / qualitative
  - experimental / survey data
  - sensitive data / not sensitive
  - small-scale / large scale
- Projects with different research dynamics
  - single researcher / large team
  - researchers located within the same institution / different institutions

Organisation of the pilot:

The pilot should be seen as an 'exchange platform'

- Kick-off meeting with all interested PIs (June 2017)
- Individual consulting with the research teams
  - ➡ FORS suggests a DM strategy

- Follow-up meetings to discuss the implementation of the strategy and any other DM issues faced by the team

Expected outcomes:

In the short-term:

- gain a better understanding of real-life DM challenges
- provide customized guidance
- work out solutions together with the research teams

In the medium to longer-term:

- develop practical guidelines and recommendations to share with the research community
- assess existing tools and the need for new tools
- possibly integrate some tools in our FORSbase platform
- deepen our knowledge (what to do when; how far to go with documentation, what's needed for data sharing versus research quality, etc.)

Conclusions

Conclusions:

- Research data management is often seen as an administrative burden by researchers.

- DMPs are often too focused on funders' needs, and not enough on researchers' needs.

- DMPs are important, but they need to be complemented with practical guidelines that go beyond sharing, and take into account project data management.

- There is a need to better understand DM with respect to research specificities, especially 'what, when, what for, how much'.

- Through a pilot study FORS is hoping to advance knowledge on the implementation of DM practices and get researchers to believe in it.
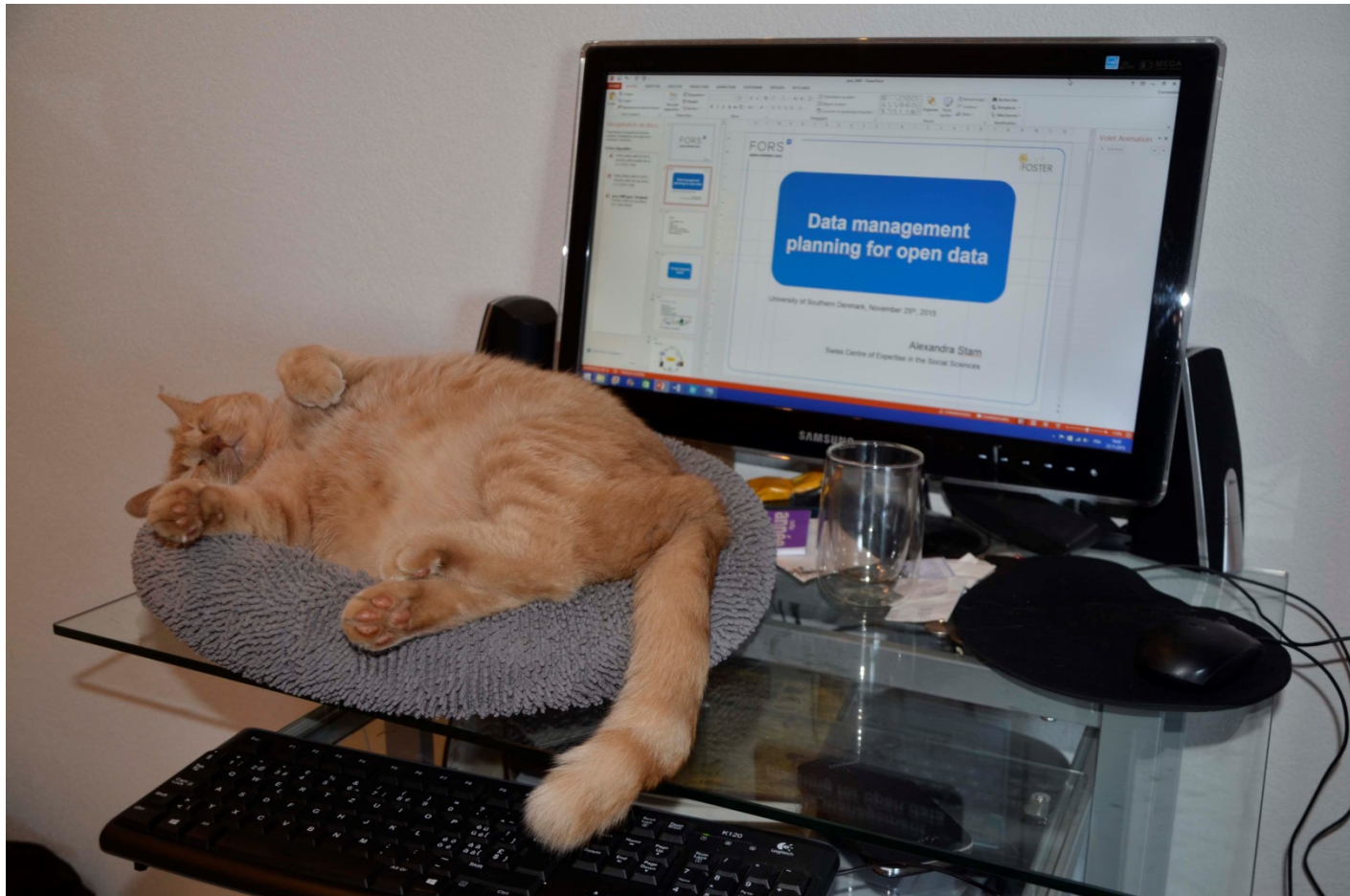
Thanks for your attention!
alexandra.stam@fors.unil.ch