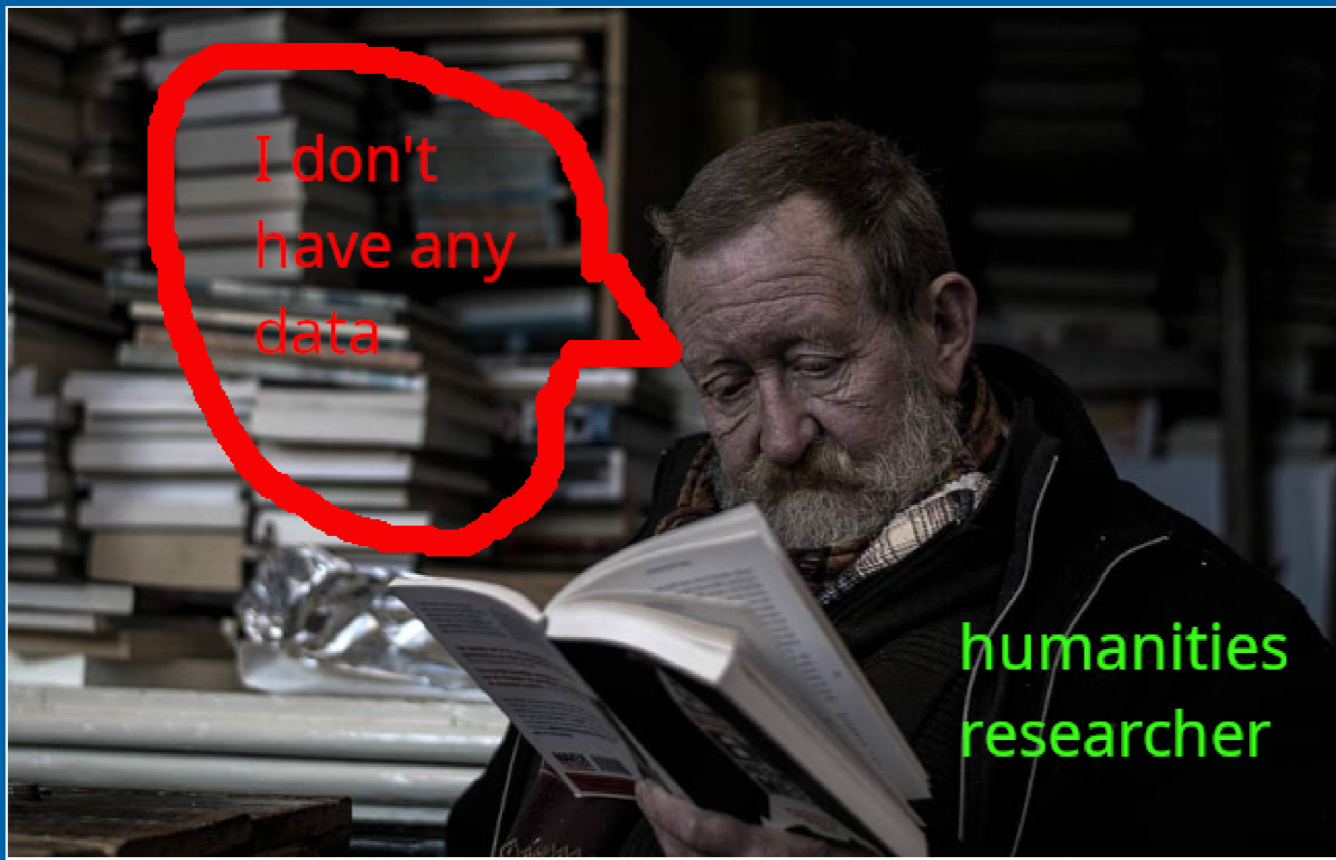




# Pioneering Data Stewardship in the Humanities: One Year of Experience at the University of Vienna

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## Embedded Data Stewards at the University of Vienna

**Data Steward Network:** The University adopted the model of a **data steward network**. The data stewards are based at faculties or research centres. They have **discipline-specific knowledge and ideally research experience**. They **supplement existing central services**.



**Pilot:** Participating faculties and rectorate **co-finance three data steward positions for three years** (1x humanities, 2x life sciences). The Faculty of Philological and Cultural Studies (PhilKult) was the first one to join. The **data stewardship coordinator** works at the University Library.

**Network:** All research data management staff is **involved in national and international activities**, such as EOSC, Data Intelligence Offensive, RDA, OpenAIRE, and DINI/nestor.

## Insights on Data Stewardship in the Humanities

**"I have no data":** The University pursues a **very broad definition of research data** in its policy. So it's very unlikely that researchers really have no data - even if they are convinced.



**Disciplines:** A huge part of our research support staff has a humanities background. So it's not that new to humanists to have discipline-specific support. It is new that they have **ONE contact person for all questions** - no need to remember which university department is the right one.

**Topics:** A majority of requests in the humanities so far concerned **long-term preserving the functionality of web applications and websites** (digital editions, databases, Wikis...). **Data management plan support** was also required often, but this was not discipline-specific.

### FACULTY



- largest faculty of the University of Vienna
- roots go back to the university's founding date in 1365
- 800 researchers in 14 departments: philologies and area studies
- world's cultural heritage in its material and immaterial form - languages, literature, music, religious practices, artefacts and media of every type, social and cultural developments
- inter-faculty focus on digital humanities and teacher education

### RDM MILESTONES



- 2008: institutional repository PHAIDRA launched
- 2017 regular RDM training established
- 2021: RDM policy adopted
- 2021: central RDM service desk launched
- 2022: first two data steward:esse:s hired
- 2022/23: first run of data steward certificate course
- 2023: third data steward:ess hired

### RECRUITING & ONBOARDING



- applicants are probably not formally trained as data stewards; way to role is diverse - librarian, researcher, data scientist, IT support staff... Job announcements should reflect that!
- prepare a comprehensive onboarding programme
- communicate power structures and existing resources
- define (non-)responsibilities
- immediately start connecting them with faculty

## Goal in the First Year: Establishing Data Stewardess as the Central Go-To Person for all Things RDM

### Successes

- warm welcome and interest throughout all institutes, even from people who don't think they have data
- computer centre started pilot project for long-term preserving web applications with many usecases of PhilKult faculty
- discipline-specific training for PhD students started
- faculty website contains information on all the RDM services independently from which university department offers them
- mutual learning, support, and fun within data steward team
- embedded data steward concept proved as right choice

### Challenges

- patience when permeating structures of a 750+ year old organisation with 10,000 employees and creating a new role
- making clear that a data steward:ess does not only support researchers who are and/or identify as *digital humanists*
- balancing demands of researchers and non-responsibilities of data stewards: "no, I won't write your DMP for you"...
- conveying that RDM is part of good academic practice also in the humanities and not just more bureaucracy imposed on researchers
- establishing an open door policy when the researchers are split up between at least five locations within Vienna

### Next Steps

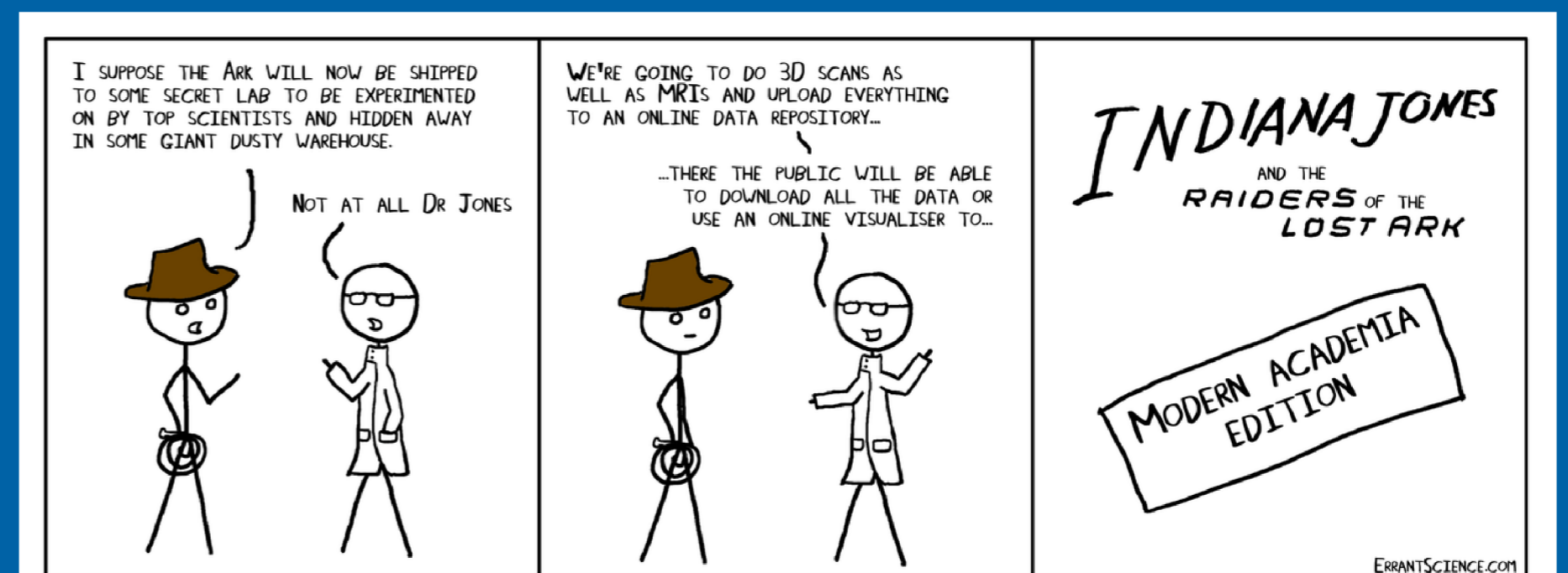


- establishing new training formats, such as cooperative self-learning and DMP meet-ups
- establishing walk-in support at different locations
- discipline-specific quick-start guide
- recommendation for preparing websites for long-term archiving from the start
- needs assessment

### Outlook



- huge interest by other humanities faculties: hopefully, there will be additional data steward:esse:s already within the pilot phase
- continuity: it feels unlikely that the programme will be discontinued after the pilot, but who knows for sure what the budgetary future holds. We keep our fingers crossed.



Faculty RDM website



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