

# EOSC Support Office Austria: Visions, needs and requirements for research data and practices

---

*Angela Fabris (Universität Klagenfurt), Katharina Flicker (TU Wien)*

This interview is also available for download: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8084534>

In 2015 the vision of a federated system of infrastructures supporting research by providing an open multi-disciplinary environment to publish, find and re-use data, tools and services led to the launch of the [European Open Science Cloud](#) (EOSC). Against this background, bodies such as the [EOSC Association](#) on the European level and the [EOSC Support Office Austria](#) on the national one have been established.

Within this framework and since research has always been at the heart of EOSC, we are eliciting visions, needs and requirements for research data and practices from researchers who are located at public universities in Austria. Let's see what literature and film scientist [Angela Fabris](#) has to say!

**“It is essential for research that a text that was originally physically available is also made available in digital form so that we can access the data more easily.”**

**KF:** Would you please start by describing your field of research?

**AF:** I mainly do research in the field of Romance literary studies, but also in film studies. My focus is on genre studies. That means I deal with different genres in literature, but also in film, such as western films, horror films, or films that deal with posthumanism.

**KF:** What research data do you work with in particular?

**AF:** I work, for example, with journals and literary texts, as well as with visual media, such as film and images.

**KF:** Would you please describe the research processes in your discipline – especially in connection with the handling of research data?

**AF:** I do qualitative research. As soon as I have an idea in connection with a research question, I start by reading up on the topic in a relatively general way or by approaching it from different angles. In the course of this, I concretize the research question. In addition, I usually work with an interdisciplinary mix of methods. Among other things, I use various methods of text analysis, narrative perspectives, and anthropological methods.

**“I think we certainly have the possibilities in literary and film studies to be able to process such amounts of data.”**

It is also worth mentioning that I try to work with a large corpus of materials. Typically, many researchers use a very small corpus, such as the books of a single author, or even "only" a single work in which a philological, critical study is then written. I, on the other hand, am currently working on a project focused on the lottery fantasy and am trying to examine between 70 and 100 texts. In the context of film studies, I am currently examining 162 films and about 20 series. This method is criticized because of the amount of data it generates, but I have the impression that this is the only way I can do justice to my research questions. I think we certainly have the possibilities in literary and film studies to be able to process such amounts of data. However, there are certainly difficulties sometimes in terms of access to materials.

**KF:** May I ask what kind of difficulties you are referring to?

**AF:** As already mentioned, we work with journals and literary texts, for example. If these are not yet available in digital form or cannot be ordered and delivered due to their condition – I also work with texts from the 18th century – we have to travel to digitize them. Often, I simply take photos with my mobile phone, which is not optimal. It's easier to work with text files because I could search for words, which is not possible with photos or image files.

“I think in my discipline, the exchange of ideas or the discussion of research is more problematic than the actual exchange of the data.”

It is essential for research that a text that was originally physically available is also made available in digital form so that we can access the data more easily. Various databases are also very

important in this context. For example, I have used around 40 different databases when conducting my research, and the quality of the data stored can vary greatly. In some cases, there are text files, in others only image files. I often find what I am looking for in US libraries because a lot is digitized there.

“In my opinion, we need a mechanism that makes it possible to protect intellectual property efficiently.”

**KF:** What could be possible solutions?

**AF:** The more that is available in digital form, the better. On a systemic level, it would of course be practical to work in research teams, and at universities, administrative or student teams could assist, for example, in searching for data or ordering a wide variety of works. Both activities are very time-consuming.

**KF:** The former would also favor the exchange of data. Is data sharing common in your discipline?

**AF:** That is not easy to answer. I am very cautious about this and share very little - except within my own research team and with project partners. In my discipline, we usually only publish when research is finished. Until then, we share ideas at conferences and meetings. Others, however, might further develop ideas without mentioning the actual source. Therefore, I think in my discipline, the exchange of ideas or the discussion of research is more problematic than the actual exchange of the data. That is a pity, of course, because research certainly benefits from discussion, critical comments and the like. This is the only way I can sensibly develop my topics and narrow down or expand research questions.

**KF:** Do you have an idea how this could be solved?

**AF:** I have the impression that it would be better to publish something first and then present it. For example, I once thought about publishing my papers before the actual research is finished. That way, authorship and date would be clearly documented. In my opinion, we need a mechanism that makes it possible to protect intellectual property efficiently. Especially the latter would also promote a research culture in which open discussions and exchange are possible, which seems to me - especially in my discipline - to be unusual at the moment.

**KF:** Thank you very much for the interview!



*Angela Fabris is an Associate Professor of Romance Literature at the University of Klagenfurt and a visiting professor at University Ca' Foscari of Venice. Her research touches on different themes, figures, and times in Italian, Spanish, French, and European literature, also from a comparative perspective, from Boccaccio to the genre of the "Spectators" and the contemporary crime fiction. She is one of the leaders of the project The Invention of the Lottery Fantasy – A Cultural, Transnational, and Transmedial History of European Lotteries, funded by the Research Council of Norway (<https://www.ntnu.edu/lottery>). She has edited 3 volumes on film genres. Since 2020, she has directed the AAIM series with the publisher De Gruyter ([Alpe Adria e dintorni, itinerari mediterranei](https://www.degruyter.com) ([degruyter.com](https://www.degruyter.com)) about Mediterranean literature and film studies.*