A Song of [N]ISO and FAIR (or how to remove the OTHER from repository crosstalk)

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Open Repositories 2023

Introduction

Repositories enable researchers to share their outputs with wider audiences, increase their visibility and impact, and comply with funder and publisher requirements.

We present a challenge for our community to engage and collaborate to develop more robust and effective taxonomies, standards, and processes for repositories and infrastructure.

How can we improve the way that repositories store and share research outputs from different disciplines, especially those that are currently not well represented?

OTHERing non-STEM

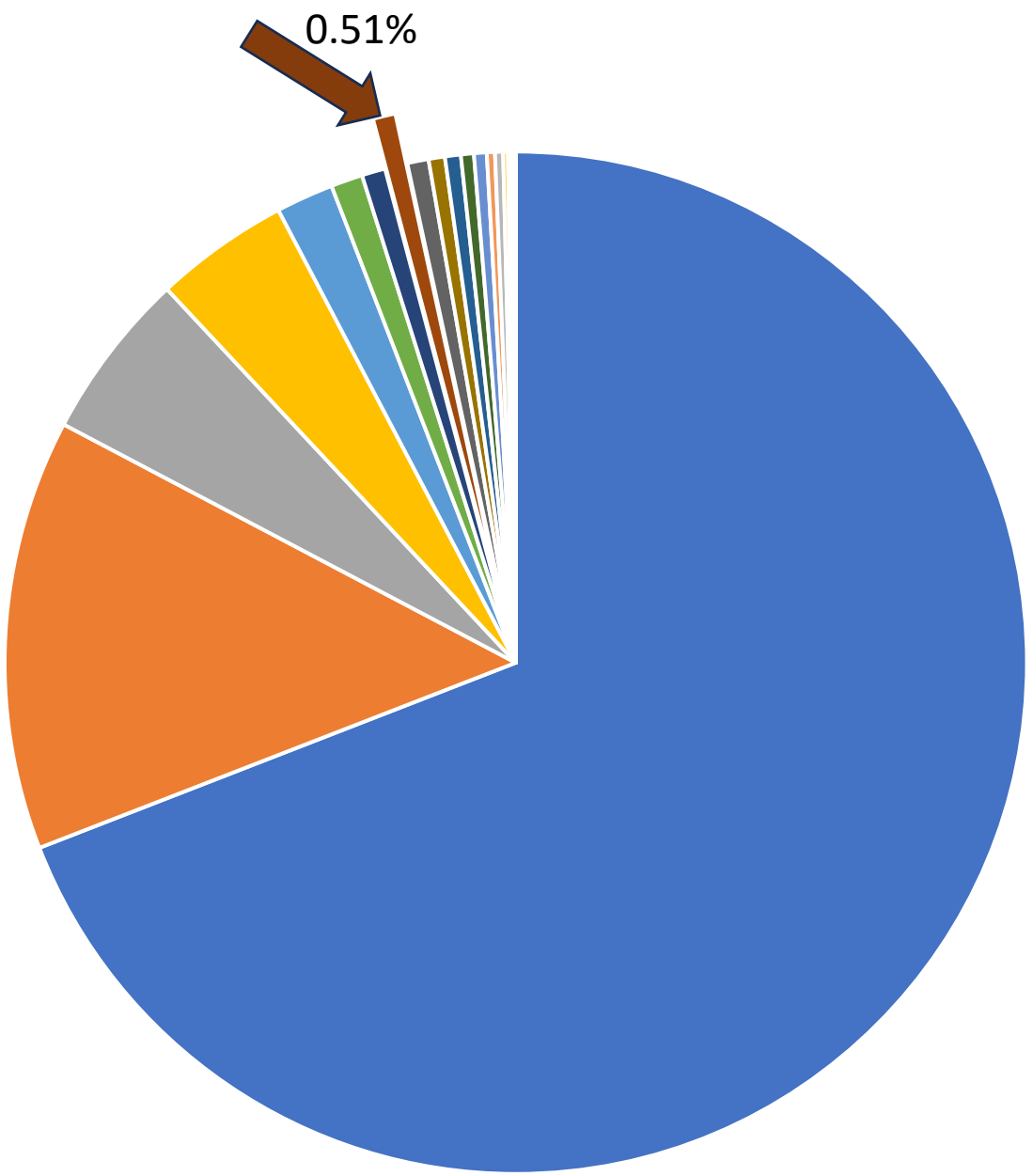
- Repositories often either:
  - fail to capture and communicate the diversity and richness of research outputs from non-STEM disciplines
- OR
  - Are incredibly specialised and difficult to interact with contents in a FAIR manner

- Current taxonomies, standards, and processes are often biased towards STEM fields and do not account for the specific needs and characteristics of other disciplines.

- Non-STEM outputs are often categorized as "OTHER" or assigned generic or inaccurate labels that do not reflect their nature or value.

Failing the "OTHER”s

- The "OTHER" category is a catch-all term that obscures the diversity and richness of research outputs from non-STEM disciplines.
- The "OTHER" category reduces the findability, accessibility, interoperability, and reusability (FAIRness) of research outputs and makes them less visible and discoverable by other researchers and users.
- The information loss or distortion in the "OTHER" category
  - limits the potential impact and value of research outputs from non-STEM disciplines.
  - affects the recognition and reward of researchers and their outputs by funders, publishers, institutions, peers, etc.



How we propose to engage with the research community and gatekeeping bodies to improve the taxonomies, standards, and processes used in repositories and infrastructure

- **initiate a dialogue** and collaboration with various stakeholders involved in repository management and information sharing, such as repository managers, developers, researchers, metadata standards community, PID community , etc.

- **identify and address the gaps** and needs in current taxonomies, standards ,and processes for repositories and infrastructure , based on the experiences and feedback of non-STEM researchers , especially practice researchers .

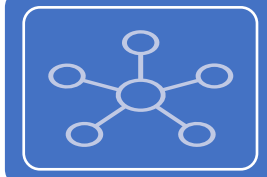
- **develop and test** new or improved taxonomies , standards, and processes for repositories and infrastructure , based on best practices , evidence ,and user needs .

PR Voices

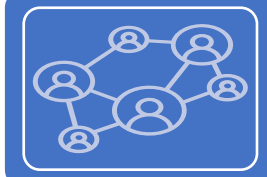
1. Define the technical & academic challenges of an open library of practice research that will effectively share and disseminate practice research to academic and non-academic audiences
2. Determine the most efficient and successful route by building on existing open-source technology and open standards

- Workstreams

Repositories

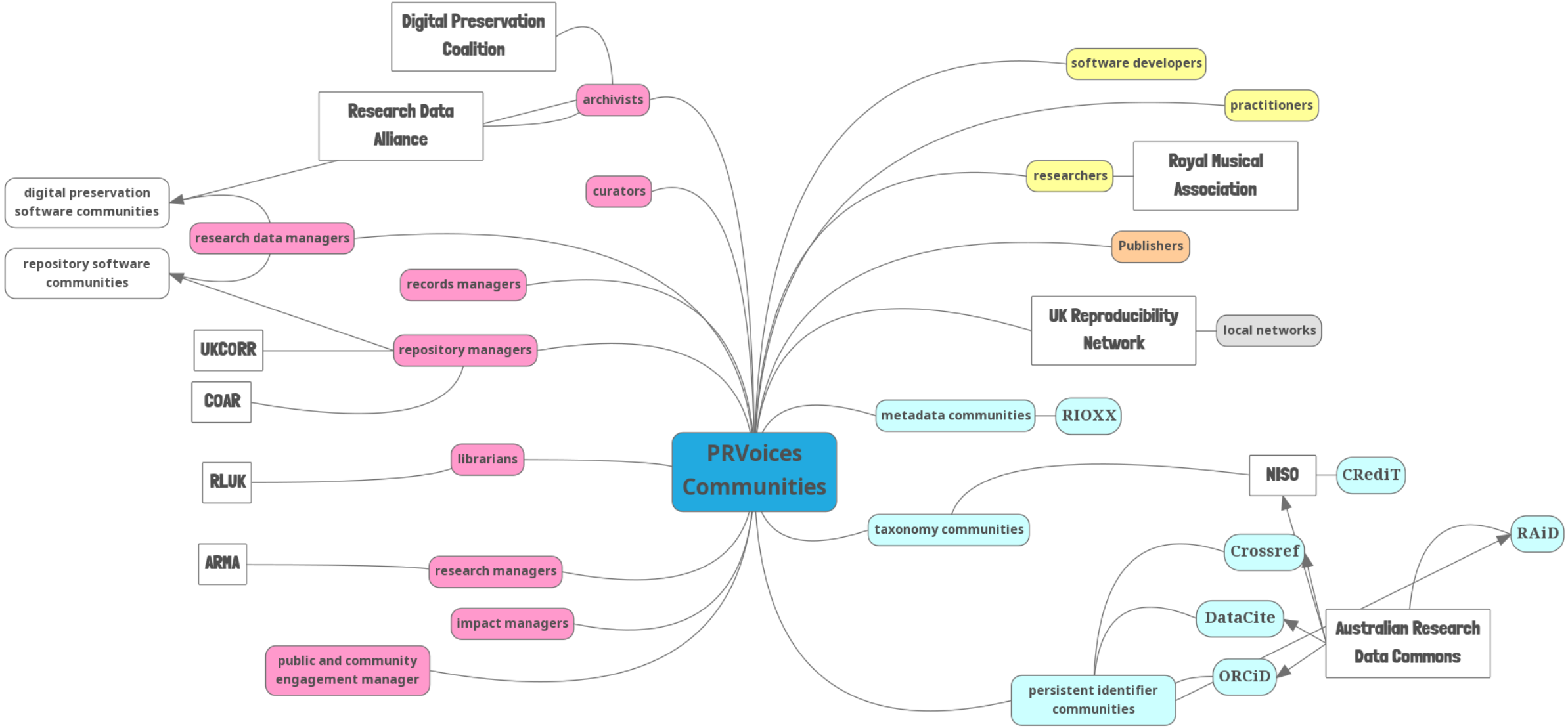


Metadata & Persistent Identifiers



Creating a Practice Research Community of Practice

PR Voices Engagement



PR VOICES Findings

Ongoing community engagement is key to success

Platform needs to be interactive (capture alongside the project not retrospectively), embedded in community, respect form and function, enable discoverability, citation and preservation, recognize contributors, process AND product

Open standards must underpin this work

Challenges include sustainability, expertise, preservation

PR VOICES Recommendations

CO-DESIGN WITH COMMUNITY

EMBED PRACTICE RESEARCH IN OPEN STANDARDS

MORE THAN RETROSPECTIVE ARCHIVE

NEED FOR TRAINING PROGRAMME

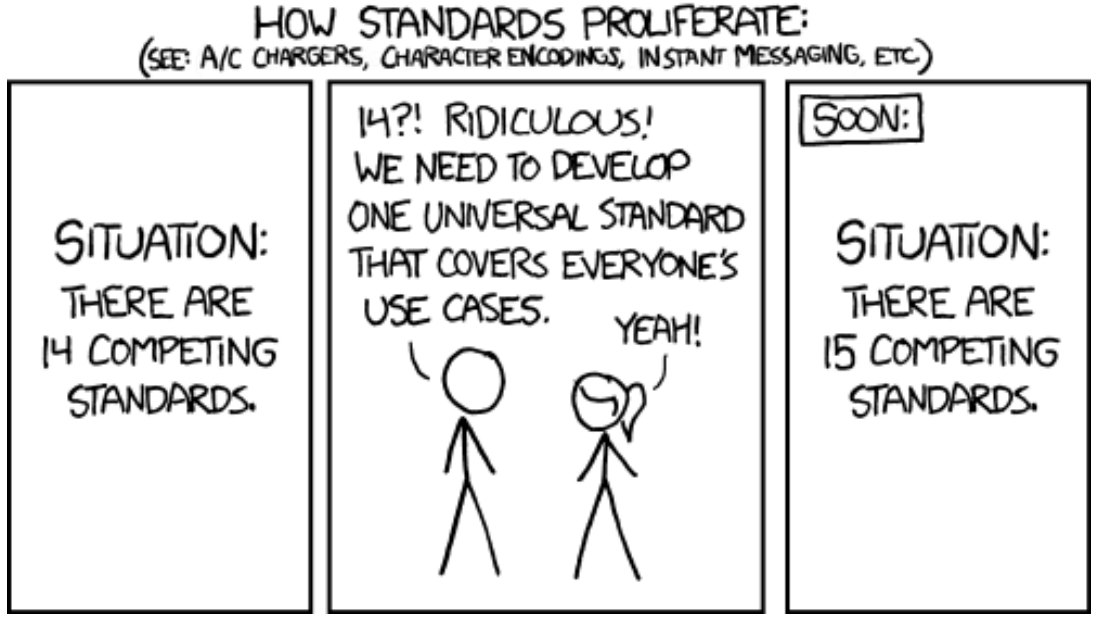
INVESTMENT IN CAPACITY, PEOPLE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

What are the potential benefits and challenges?

Benefits

Avoid 927!!

- Using metadata standards and vocabularies that cover all the relevant aspects of research outputs
- Using persistent identifiers (PIDs) to link and identify research outputs across different platforms and systems
- Using crosswalks or mappings to convert or align metadata from different sources or formats



Call to action!

- Improve the quality and visibility of **ALL** research outputs
- Enhance the FAIRness of **ALL** research outputs
  - Facilitate their discovery and reuse
- Not new
  - NISO / COAR / RDA / etc
- Equitable partnerships for all involved in research

Questions