

A web application for data management planning



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Introduction

There is a growing call for researchers to prepare data management plans (DMPs) for their research projects. DMPs describe how research data will be handled throughout all stages of the research lifecycle, including data collection, analysis, dissemination, and preservation.

Having a DMP can help predict and mitigate potential data management problems that may arise throughout the course of a research project. It also outlines how data will be handled after a research project has concluded.

It is becoming more common for funding agencies to ask for DMPs as part of grant applications, especially in the U.S. and the U.K. DMPs are also useful at an organizational level (e.g. to address institutional or departmental needs for research data management).

About the application:

To meet the needs of researchers in Alberta and Canada, the University of Alberta Libraries is launching a web-based application to help researchers with the data management planning process.

This tool has been adapted from an open source Ruby on Rails application developed by the Digital Curation Centre in the U.K (<https://dmponline.dcc.ac.uk>), and it will be hosted on local servers at the University of Alberta. The tool will be open to anyone to use.

The tool guides users through a customized set of questions based on institutional or funding requirements. Initially, the tool will include generic data management planning questions, but new question templates can be added or adapted as needed.

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Data Management Planning Tool

Signed in as Dale Storie

My plans | Create plan | About | Help

My Super New Shiny Research Project 6/19

Plan details | University of Alberta Data Management Questions | Share | Export

Data Collection (5 questions, 4 answered) +

Documentation and Metadata (3 questions, 0 answered) +

Storage and Backup (2 questions, 2 answered) -

Are your digital and non-digital data, and any backup copies, held in a safe and secure location? How will you manage access and security?

ualberta Guidance

Provide a description of how your data will be organized, archived, and protected during your research project. This should include storage methods and backup procedures for your data, as well as the physical and digital resources needed. Any security or protection measures required for sensitive material or intellectual property should be addressed here as well, including who has access to the data.

Save

Answered 4 minutes ago by Dale Storie

How many copies will you maintain and how will you keep them synchronized? How will you handle file versioning, so you always know which is the master version of your data?

ualberta Guidance

Describe how you and your research team will keep multiple copies of your data synchronized. Please include whether you will be using any systematic means of versioning files (e.g. Dataverse or a source control management system like Github). If synchronization of the data by automated means is not possible, describe how you will keep track of it manually.

Save

Answered less than a minute ago by Dale Storie

Preservation (3 questions, 0 answered) +

Data Sharing and Reuse (4 questions, 0 answered) +

Responsibilities and Resources (2 questions, 0 answered) +

Export

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Using the DMP Tool

After creating an account and logging in, users will be able to create a new plan. They choose a funding agency and institution (if applicable), and then are presented with a customized question form based on their choices.

Questions are grouped into sections (e.g. Documentation and Metadata, Storage and Backup). Each question may have a suggested answer or additional guidance on how to answer it effectively. Users save their work after each question.

After completing a DMP, users can export it to a PDF or text file, so it can be attached to grant applications or included with other project documentation. There is also an option to share DMPs with collaborators, so they can view or edit it.

Conclusion:

This DMP tool will allow researchers to quickly and efficiently create DMPs that address specific funding and institutional requirements. These DMPs can be easily shared and edited by collaborators and teams. They can also be stored and adapted for use with subsequent projects.

The DMP tool also allows administrators to create customized template forms to help implement data management policies. This flexibility is important in an ever changing research landscape.

The U of A DMP Tool is set to launch in early summer 2014. If you are interested in providing feedback on our existing DMP template, or collaborating with us to develop customized templates, please contact us at data@ualberta.ca.