Research Data: facts and figures

Growth in policies for data sharing

80+ Funders internationally now have policies
54 that require or encourage data sharing
31

Most of these policies have been announced in the past 5 years.

29 funders - including the European Commission, National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Wellcome Trust - cover the costs of data sharing and data management plans.1

Growth in data sharing

72% of researchers are curating their data for sharing.2
64% The number of researchers who routinely share their data has also grown year on year, to 64% in 2018.2

The case for data sharing

There is evidence that good data practice leads to:

• Increased citation3
• Increased reproducibility (quality/robustness) of research4
• Increased productivity5
• Reduced harm and costs of biased/non-transparent research6
• Support for career progression7
• Better return on investment in research funding8

Researchers are increasingly aware of open data and are actively re-using open datasets for research

80% of researchers are aware of open data available to reuse4.
79% of these researchers are now willing to reuse open data sets in their own research.2

The majority of data sharing practice is not optimal

• The most common method of data sharing is still as supplementary information in a journal article2
• The most common ways to store data are on personal hard drives, external hard drives and institutional servers2
• 30% of researchers have lost research data2
• 60% of researchers have rarely, or never, created a data management plan2

Researchers are hampered by time constraints and a lack of knowledge around data sharing. Organizing data in a presentable and useful way was the biggest challenge to data sharing identified (46%). 37% were unsure about copyright and licensing. 33% did not know which repository to use. Time was the biggest factor for 26% and cost for 19%.9

Top barriers to sharing

76% of researchers rate the importance of making their data discoverable highly – with an average rating of 7.3 out of 10.

SOURCES AND REFERENCES

1. Internal analysis, global funder policies
9. Stuart, D; Baynes, G; Hrynaszkiewicz, I; Alin, K; Penny, D; Lurafti, M; et al. (2018): Whitepaper: Practical challenges for researchers in data sharing https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.6075011.v1