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Image: Structured Light by Lucas W, 2012

Research data management support

A brief guide for research staff

What is research data?

Research data is created as a direct result of 'doing research'. It excludes teaching materials and administrative documents (such as job descriptions, emails or financial reports). Research data comes in an endless variety of formats.

What is research data management?

Research data management usually involves:

- Creating a Data Management Plan (DMP) which is submitted along with a research funding application to explain how data will be managed both during and after a project.
- Storing research data safely and securely throughout a project and sharing it with authorised colleagues.
- At the end of a project, sorting and cataloguing data and making a selection openly available for a number of years.

Why manage research data?

Managing research data increases the value of research, improves research visibility and increases citation rates. Also, managing and opening up research data is now a requirement of most major research funders and many academic publishers.

What can I do?

DMPs and similar documents should be carefully written; strong funding applications have been unsuccessful where a data management plan has been weak. The University Research Data Service is happy to provide support and check DMPs.

Research data should not be stored long-term on USB sticks, CDs, DVDs, local PC hard drives or using public cloud services. Each lead researcher is entitled to 5TB of free storage in the University's Research Data Storage Facility.

If your research is UKRI, Wellcome Trust, Cancer Research or Horizon Europe funded, there is now an explicit requirement that articles must include a statement on how to access any underlying data, or an explanation of why this is not possible. A project website is not the best way to make research data publicly available as data may need to remain available and retain the same URL for many years. The University provides its own, long term Research Data Repository (data.bris.ac.uk/data/).

What help is available?

The University Research Data Service can help with any aspect of research data management. Visit bristol.ac.uk/staff/researchers/data or email data-bris@bristol.ac.uk for more information.