# 10 things I wish I had known before my institution introduced RDM

Thanks to the growing number of funder, government and publisher policies, research data management (RDM) has reached a tipping point. But how do you get started? And are there ways to optimize existing programs? In a recent Elsevier webinar series on research data management (RDM), data experts and librarians highlighted their recommended focus areas.

View the webinars https://bit.ly/rdmhub

PUBLICATIONS WITH DATA ARE GROWING FAST
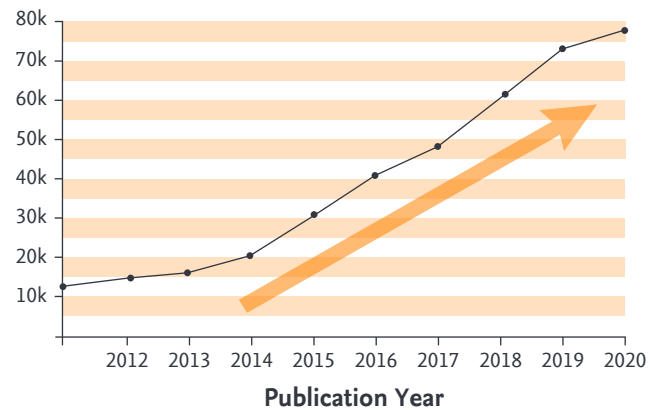
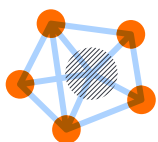Source: Scopus, Elsevier's abstract and citation database

1. The essentials

E.g., industry best practice, what the terms RDM, open data and FAIR really mean, and what kind of budget and resources are required.

> *"I wish I had known how much time and energy it takes to do it right!"*
>
> **Librarian from Europe (online poll participant)**

2. Positioning

RDM is not a standalone activity. It should be included in every phase of a research project, from planning to completion.

3. Approach

It should be a multidisciplinary and cross-departmental effort involving everyone from researchers to IT experts, and they all need to work collaboratively.

DID YOU KNOW?
Data can be FAIR without being open

> *"One of my most important experiences is that you need a multidisciplinary team in place from the outset – if your building blocks aren't straight, you can't build a tower."*
>
> **Nynke de Groot, Research Data Management Specialist at Erasmus University, the Netherlands**

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4. Policy

A clear institutional RDM policy not only ensures everyone is aligned on strategy, outcomes and the steps required to achieve them, it also raises awareness of what others in the organization are doing in the RDM space, and clarifies where responsibilities lie.
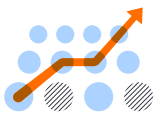
5. Examples

Others have trodden this path before you. Organizations whose RDM programs are more established can be a great source of advice and inspiration.

> *"Looking back, I would have asked more questions and gone to more of these types of webinars."*
>
> **Bill Ayres, Strategic Lead for Research Data Management at the University of Manchester Library, UK**

6. Scale

Insights into the volume of research data being generated, along with which repositories your researchers select for their deposits (and why), can be invaluable for policy and strategy planning.

7. Inclusivity

There are variations per field. These can be standards about how data is captured or shared, or repositories that are favored by a specific community. These need to be factored into plans.

> *I wish we had known that some fields of research have their own very specific repositories, and while we can stimulate them to a use a certain repository, we cannot force them - it can even be detrimental to their connection with colleagues in their field."*
>
> **Hester Kamstra, CRIS Metadata Support at the University of Groningen Library, the Netherlands**

8. Tools

There are programs available to help you, ranging from online data management plan templates to RDM training courses for librarians. There are also tools to automate time-consuming manual processes and provide tracking, e.g., Elsevier's Data Monitor, which can be linked to other solutions for sophisticated analysis, showcasing and reporting.

> *"I wish I had known that products like Data Monitor exist – they can help you save a lot of time and effort."*
>
> **Librarian from Europe (online poll participant)**

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Data Monitor in numbers

- **90%**[1] of an institution's research data is typically hosted by third-party repositories

- Data Monitor harvests metadata from **2,000+** of these repositories

- University of Manchester located **15,000**[2] new datasets when it switched on Data Monitor

- At University of Groningen, Data Monitor not only increased the number of validated datasets from **600** to **4,000**[2], it also reduced the time spent finding and validating them by nearly **70%**.

NUMBER OF VALIDATED DATASETS AT GRONINGEN
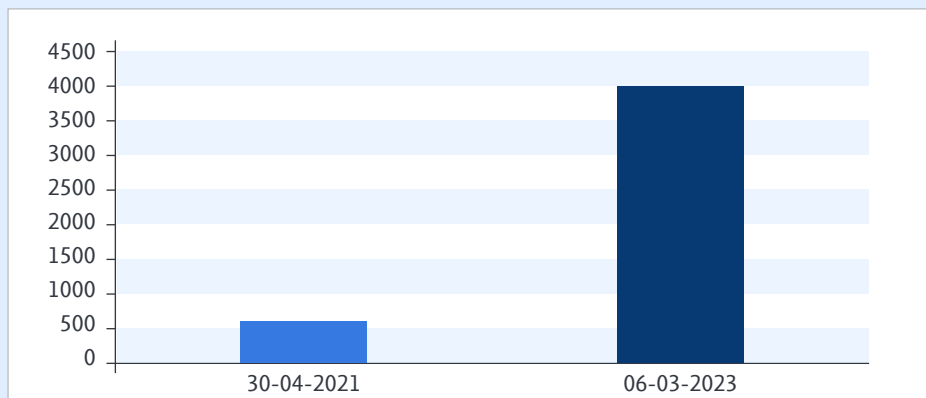
Sources: 1 E. Zudilova-Seinstra; A. Zigoni; W. Haak (2020), "Analysis of research data for 11 Institutions – Data Monitor", doi: 10.17632/k5p45z33kb.3 | 2 Webinar "Needle in a Haystack: Where is my institution's data? Monitor & report research data" https://bit.ly/rdmhub
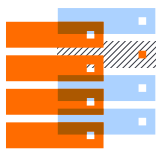
9. Metadata

Depositing data in an open repository is only step one. Robust and complete metadata ensures the data record can be found and reused by other researchers – core requirements of FAIR data. It also ensures your institution can locate, track and report on it.

10. Buy-in

Researchers often view RDM as an administrative burden so securing grass roots support is vital: those who feel invested in your institution's RDM program are more likely to comply with it. This can involve supporting their community's needs or training them as research data advocates. Another great option is to capture the metadata for them: happy researchers and accurate data, a win-win!

"Training is the most essential. Train a group of research data specialists at the university, then continue with the training of PhD students."

Max Petzold, Professor in Biostatistics & Director of the Swedish National Data Service (SND)