This is a dump of the description from https://github.com/IQSS/chat.dataverse.org/issues/7 so that comments can be added to clarify a few things.

Mentioning @RightInTwo, @doigl, @pkiraly, @skasberger, @pdurbin, @donsizemore, @4tikhonov, @pameyer initially. Feel free to ping others.

@pdurbin and I have been talking about a migration from IRC to sth. else a few times in the past (the logs aren't very searchable, so I don't link those), most recently on [2019-06-03](http://irclog.iq.harvard.edu/dataverse/2019-06-03). @pdurbin suggested on [2019-06-04](http://irclog.iq.harvard.edu/dataverse/2019-06-04#i_96155) I should create an issue here, which you are currently reading.

The topic on moving from IRC to sth. different popped up again when meeting with Dataverse friends from DE and AT in Göttingen on 2019-06-03. In our discussion, we talked about using upstream channels to talk about features and collaboration on new features within the community. Ancient IRC seems to hold back people, but they see a need for exchange among us.

The following list is somewhat opinionated. Some of these points are supported by others, while being ok with other limitations. It all depends on your taste. Please, leave feedback on this. Without feedback, things will not improve.

What I don't like about IRC:
- Web interface on chat.dataverse.org sometimes crashes (see #3), needs browser always open. Has some limited support for images and web preview.
- (Most) other IRC clients do not implement this.
- Leaving the client to look in the history (by heading to irclog.iq.harvard.edu) is cumbersome. When joining, you need the extra step reading messages posted while asleep (timezones!).
- Current history logging service is not searchable (broken?)
- Sharing images or files always needs an upload at other services and posting a link. I'm lazy, and want my things right next to the text.
- I want to easily reference GitHub issues, projects and more as links with preview. When I write sth. like `#5859`, I want it transformed to the GH issue link directly without having to craft the URL myself. To IRC clients, this text looks like a channel name reference.
- PMs have come back just recently to Freenode, but who knows how long this will last?
- Mentions in channels only work when online.
- Flaky connections are a burden in IRC. You cannot be sure a message was sent (at least not as long it does not appear in the history log) and when reading, you will only realise you missed sth. when you receive a timeout. After rejoining, you have to look at the external logs (see above).
- Setting up "always on IRC clients" to avoid the above is unfeasible for non-techies.

- As the usage of the IRC channel rises (and it does, [as @pdurbin points out](https://github.com/pdurbin/dataverse-irc-metrics)), more conversation is done in parallel. Maybe splitting up some topics into dedicated channels would help (like dev talk) also new people joining or asking for help. IRC is not very helpfull in highlighting the existance of other channels or the activity that happens there.
- IIRC the internal Slack of Harvard is used by some core devs because they dislike IRC. It would be great to have them nearer and more reachable to the community than just by GH issues. My personal experience from past contributions says there is blocking latency with this form of communication, which is bad for all community contributors.
- IRC does not have the concept of a user list/catalogue, except people online in the channel (in rdm speech: lack of metadata). There obviously is that spreadsheet for "who is who", but having this at your fingertips would be great. A browseable list, also containing (most of) core devs at IQSS and information about what they are responsible for, would make it significantly easier to mention the right people when hacking on a contribution. This could obviously be done by our great IQSS CCO, Chief Community Officer @pdurbin, too. :smile:

What I like about IRC (and a replacement needs to be on par):
- [SLOPI communication](https://github.com/good-labs/slopi-communication)