

Report from IG Data policy standardisation and implementation meeting, RDA 11th Plenary

Summary and next steps

The third official meeting of the interest group (IG) presented the first draft output of the group and the feedback received on the output - a [Journal and publisher research data policy master framework](#). IG members and the wider community now have until end of April 2018 to provide feedback on the policy framework, after which time the co-chairs will begin preparing version 1.3 of the master framework and begin drafting the policy templates. The co-chairs anticipate sharing these next documents July-September 2018. The co-chairs will also determine if a working group (WG) needs to be formed around the master framework output or if the activity continues as an IG. A related project on standardising Data Accessibility Statements (DASs) - a key part of journal data policy - managed by the Belmont Forum group of funding agencies was also presented and discussed. The Belmont Forum project is holding monthly calls over 2018 and aims to present their next findings at RDA 12th Plenary.

Meeting report

Presenters and slides

Natasha Simons and Iain Hrynaszkiewicz's combined slides are [here](#).

Fiona Murphy and Bob Samors's slides [here](#).

Session page [here](#) and collaborative notes (on which this report is based) [here](#).

Summary of presentations and discussion

Natasha Simons (ANDS)

Natasha [gave an overview](#) of the history of the group's formation, progress, and an update on what has been achieved since the last plenary. The main development since RDA P10 is the drafting of the [Journal and publisher research data policy master framework](#) and the community consultation on this document.

Iain Hrynaszkiewicz (Springer Nature)

Iain [presented](#) a summary of the methodology for drafting the [Journal and publisher research data policy master framework](#); the framework itself; followed by a [summary and synthesis of the feedback received](#) on the document - via the community calls and on comments on the document itself.

Key points presented about the framework draft

- The framework draft is quite technical/publisher focused in the later parts but is intended to get the attention of decision makers/editors on journals.
- Policy implementation is critical to how the framework is set out. We seek to avoid policies being stated by journals but the requirements not being consistently checked and enforced where needed.
- Framework will point to existing resources where appropriate and not seek to solve problems being worked on by other groups e.g. recommended repository lists.
- There are currently [15 policy features](#) arranged into [6 policy types/options](#) and this was open to discussion (although no strong opinions aired that the framework presents too few or too many options)
- One goal is to have a basic policy that any journal could adopt as a first step, without additional resources being needed.
- Data citation is represented twice in the framework as encouraging/permitting data citation is very different operationally to checking and enforcing it for every published paper (few journals are capable of doing the latter).
- Implementation of policies needs to be a shared responsibility between publishers and editors/communities for them to be effective. Publishers should help with communication and standardisation and communication, and, potentially, additional resources for implementing policy.
- There are implementational challenges in stopping using supplementary information all at once due to how journals currently utilise it.
- Criteria have been proposed for data peer review but these have not been widely enough tested beyond data journals. We would welcome a new IG on data peer review to complement this group's work.

Feedback received in the discussion, on the framework presented

- Consensus that we need to be clearer when a policy feature requires simply provision of information compared to when an action (by an author or editor or reviewer or publishing staff) is required
- Catriona MacCallum (Hindawi): Should machine readability of data availability statements be included in policy; should policies be machine readable
 - Response from Iain Hrynaszkiewicz: Ideally yes but this would fit more in the publisher implementation requirements part of the document rather than the editor/author facing information, keeping it simpler for authors. Similarly,

publishers should aim to make data availability statements available in front of the paywall.

- Wouter Haak (Elsevier): CrossRef are a logical partner for collaboration on machine readable policies but we need to manage complexity if the framework with 15 features might lead to many different combinations/policy types. Also asked why Elsevier is not listed as an early adopter of the standard policies
 - Response from Iain Hrynaszkiewicz: Agreed we should collaborate with CrossRef as things evolve. The goal would be to only allow 6 options (or whichever number we finalise) and not permit data policy features to be chosen “a la carte”. Clarified that early adopters on the slide are those organisations that have indicated they will adopt the new standard framework we have drafted, rather than organisations that have standard policies already. We would welcome Elsevier as an early adopter of the new framework.
- Paul Uhler: “Preservation” should be the policy feature rather than a repository. Should economic issues (e.g. costs of data preservation) be included.
 - Response from Natasha Simons: Potentially these aspects should be part of implementation guidelines, rather than the policy framework itself - which is mainly for journal editors

Fiona Murphy and Bob Samors (Belmont Forum)

Fiona and Bob introduced the Belmont Forum’s initiative to standardise requirements of Belmont Forum funding agencies for requiring data accessibility statements from their grantees. [Fiona and Bob’s slides](#).

Key points from presentation

- Belmont Forum have developed their own community and implementation plan intended to be FAIR *and* Open.
- Intention is to amplify existing initiatives rather than adding to the noise.
- Decision made to focus on something specific and achievable: Data Accessibility Statements, working with funders, publishers and other stakeholders. DAS will be developed by Belmont and science publishers. It will be implemented by funders and publishers.
- A number of considerations
 - Are they encouraged or mandated?
 - Apply to specific data types, data associated with paper, or the whole research project
 - Which persistent identifiers? Should this include ORCIDiDs?
 - Should researchers be told before application for funding that DASs will be required?
 - How are DASs enforced?
 - Do DASs need to be in front of a paywall? Consensus it should.

- DAS covers some similar principles to data citation but serves different purposes too, such as covering situations where data are not citeable and providing human readable information (e.g. for compliance monitoring) about data accessibility.
- Decided on 'accessibility' rather than 'availability' so that it seems more forceful - 'availability' sounds like something that potentially can be ignored
- Decisions on mandating and compliance have not been agreed and should become clearer in due course.
- Not a wealth of instances available of DASs that include licensing and so hard to know if it would be beneficial for a funder to mandate a specific license and its inclusion in DASs
- Data should not be closed due to commercial restrictions - this would work for Belmont but not potentially for all publisher/journal policies
- Plan to have template, standard wording and wider policy available for review at RDA Plenary 12 in November 2018. Monthly teleconferences will continue.

Discussion and feedback in the meeting

- Is limited number of references in published papers an issue?
 - There are solutions to this, such as publishers removing restrictions or utilising online only references. Also, tools such as EBI [BioStudies](#) database provides a high level DOI that then lists all the sources of data.
- If there are costs/fees associated with accessing data described in a DAS, these should be included in the DAS.
- Accessibility can mean different things in some contexts e.g. accessibility of websites for users with disabilities.
- Should ORCIDs be included in the DASs e.g. for data managers?
 - DAS should be about the data not the creators/managers of the data, which might change. Institutions have a longer lifespan than the researchers - 'data can be found in the Institute of Xs archives'. Including the information about the data collectors should be on the data record landing page but not in DASs which should be short.

Closing remarks and next steps

- IG members and the wider community have until end of April 2018 to provide feedback. After which time the Co-chairs will begin preparing version 1.3 of the master framework and begin drafting the policy templates. Co-chairs anticipate sharing these next documents July-September 2018.
- Co-chairs to determine if a WG needs to be formed around the master framework output or if the activity continues under an IG.