RDA 27th Plenary Meeting Collaborative Notes

Session Group	Uptake of Digital Research Infrastructure IG
Session title	Surveying the Uptake of Digital Research Infrastructure – Early Results and Implications
Session link for more information	https://www.rd-alliance.org/groups/uptake-digital-research-infrastructure-ig/plenary-participation/?application_id=236031
Session programme date & time	Breakout Session 4 – 15:30-17:00 BST, Wednesday, 7 October 2026
Presentation slides URL	*https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/19G22RnqFrf_KL72_bT229hKUcloVkRnm/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=106615001352599782020&rtpof=true&sd=true*

Session summary (to be filled by group / BoF chairs after the session):
We will use the content in the table below to highlight your work to the RDA community in a report by the Technical Advisory Board (RDA VP26 report example). **Please complete ALL fields by *Friday, 23 October*, to be included in the report**.Please also update your group webpage with the key takeaways from your session.

1.	**Describe what your session is about in three sentences maximum:** *The key points the session was about was to finalise the survey, and the discussion of a catalogue of qualitative and quantitative measurements of uptake. Sophie Janacek, Head of the Digital presented an inspirational talk "Measurement of the Value of the DRIs that UKRI provide", and short contributions from the Evaluation of Research IG and National Data Services IG were respectively shared by Francoise Genova and Andrew Treloar.*
2.	**Highlight a maximum of five key outcomes/actions/takeaways of your session:** 1. *The current survey contains too many free text questions - this will take too long for people to fill in. We need to review the survey and consider carefully which free-text questions we can replace with multiple choice / drop-down lists, and also invite respondents to let us know if they would like to be part of a focus group / interview cohort so we can capture their more in-depth thoughts. We still plan to test the survey before dissemination and are looking for testers.* 2. *For our list of indicators, we should also think about how indicators can be misused, lead to unwanted behaviour etc., and also think about counter-indicators.* 3. *We will continue to collect more candidate indicators and measures.*

	4. *We plan to hold a meeting of the IG in the first half of November to present the outcomes from this session and collect further input from the group members. Note added post-Plenary: The meeting is scheduled on 12 November 2026.* 5. *The IG is looking for additional co-chairs. Contact us if you are interested.*
3.	**What collaborations or synergies did you discover between your group and other RDA group(s) or external (outside of the RDA) organisations?** *Confirmation of the liaison with* *RDA Evaluation of Research IG* *RDA National Data Services IG*

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Collaborative Session Notes *(To be used by participants and chairs during the session)*

New to the RDA? Find out where to start | Get involved in the RDA Community
This meeting takes place in accordance with the RDA Code of Conduct

Attendees Check-in

Please add your details below (add rows as needed):

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Offline contributors

Please add your details below (add rows as needed):

Full Name	Affiliation	Country	Email

Notes

Please note that **P27 sessions are not recorded.** Ensure your notes capture the discussion accurately for future reference.

Agenda

- Welcome, Background of the group, Statement of Work, current status (10 min) – Sverker Holmgren
- Inspirational talk (10min + 5 min Q&A) – Sophie Janacek
- Working session to finalise the survey (15 min)
- Presentation connecting to Evaluation of Research IG (5 min) – Francoise Genova
- Presentation connecting to National Data Services IG (5 min) – Andrew Treloar
- Working session on a catalogue of qualitative and quantitative measures of uptake (35 min)
- Closing and next steps (5 mins)

Session Notes

1. Welcome, Background of the group, Statement of Work, current status (10 min) – Sverker Holmgren

The Group has been active since Plenary 21 (2023) and endorsed as an RDA IG in January 2025. BoF and IG sessions at all Plenaries since P21. IG Statement of Work

The IG agreed on a definition of *Digital Research Infrastructures (DRI)*

> DRI refers to ecosystems that connect people, skills, knowledge, and technical infrastructure with policy and governance to enhance the value and impact of digital research objects. Elements of DRI include the digital tools, services, facilities, and support that enable researchers to curate, process, analyse, share and/or access, digital objects including data, software and workflows efficiently to enable research and innovation.

and of *Uptake*

> Uptake is the adoption and integration of DRI into research practice by research communities

and institutions.The extent to which research communities and institutions adopt digital research infrastructure (DRI), can be measured along a variety of dimensions:

- Use of DRI
- Integration of DRI into research workflows
- Collaboration and data sharing through DRI
- Production of research outputs using DRI
- Innovation and efficiency
- Capacity building through training
- Policy and investment support
- Cost benefit analysis

A comment on the definition: the first sentence refers to uptake by communities and institutions. I would also add individual researchers to that sentence.

2. Inspirational talk

Sophie Janacek, Head of UKRI Digital Research Infrastructure - *Measurement of the Value of the DRIs that UKRI provide*

Her presentation slides are included in the meeting slides. A summary is provided below.

UKRI's DRIs include data infrastructure and services; large-scale compute; software; foundational tools, techniques and services for interoperability, security and sustainability; people and skills.

Increasing demand for evidence: UKRI new "outcomes-facused approach to investment" & Strategy 2026-2031. Increasing expectation to understand and demonstrate the value of R&I investments across portfolios.

Infrastructure impacts

What type of evidence to answer strategic questions such as are we delivering what we set out to achieve? what difference is this investment making? what outcomes are emerging? How do we improve?

Evidence used to support accountability, investment decisions, learning, advocacy.

Measurements for RIs are challenging (long pathways to impact, diversity of benefits, multiple contributors, direct & indirect benefits, different stakeholders/different questions). A striuctured approach is needed for evidence collection.

DRI is complex, it is not just a physical infrastructure (skilled people, software, datasets, …)

e.g. ARCHER2 High Performance Computer Evaluation, Nov. 2025

Current work in a ‘cross-UKRI’ programme

What evidence we might wish to have in 5 years time: the questions we want to answer/indicators/data collection/evidence & insights/decisions

Among the Q/A:

- UKRI uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures
- Impact: what would have happened if we do not have the RI, return on investment, benefit for science, …
- Discussion of whether software and datasets are infrastructures
- Metrics require time and money. In some cases interviews of individuals are performed. The metrics can be very different from different RIs.
- Take the best approach you can.

3. Working session to finalise the survey (15 min)

Please help us improve our survey:

Survey Google doc: https://tinyurl.com/UPDRISurvey

Comments invited about the introduction, flow of question, survey dissemination and any other topic. See our question list below with the comment provided by the participants in the Note-taking document. Additional comments can be provided in the document.

The survey will be shared with the IG for feedback. It will be tested. People interested can become pilot-testers.

The survey takes different roles into account.

Comment: It is good if a respondent can see all questions before starting to answer

Comment: Free-text answers might give incomplete, scattered answers, with not as much details as you may want.. Drop-down menus might be better. Or perhaps a mix.

Comment: Is it clear if the answers should relate to *one* DRI or might cover several? If they relate to a single DRI it will be easier to answer.

Comment: Make the survey multiple-choice and test it to verify that not everybody answers 'Other'

Comment: A short and easy to read introduction explaining why it is important.

Comment: Envisage a shorter survey - not everybody will have the time to fill the whole form. It depends whether you wish to deal with many answers. A shorter survey will produce many answers, a conversation fewer and more detailed ones.

Comment: Complement the survey with interviews! This gives deeper input. In this setting, a survey with drop-down menus might be even more relevant.

Comment: It might be good to give some examples of how uptake/outcomes/impact is currently assessed by other actors.

Comment: Lots of work will be needed to extract information from the survey.

Comment to the comment: Using a sovereign AI as a support may help but you will have to go through the whole survey anyway.

Our questions:

a. Introduction:
    i. Does the introduction make sense?

    ii. What else do we need to include here - e.g. a statement on confidentiality, data handling?

Comment: It is important to keep the language in the introduction informal, and explains why this survey is important to the respondent.

    iii. How should this be improved for a global audience?

b. Questions:
    i. Does the flow of questions make sense?

    ii. Are the questions understandable?

iii. Are there any terms or concepts that we should explain for a global audience?

c. Survey dissemination
   i. Which channels should we use to send out the survey

   ii. Can you help us disseminate it?

d. Do you have any other comments / feedback?

4. Presentation connecting to Evaluation of Research IG (5 min) – Francoise Genova

No slides were provided

A good liaison was established between the two IG from the start.

A common meeting was organised in February 2026 to present the Data Usage Typology developed by the relevant FORCE11 Working Group. The publication of the WG outcome was announced to the two IG members, with an invitation to share comments and suggestions. The WG has been updating its product using the community feedback. An updated version will soon be disseminated. The two IG members will be informed when the updated version will be disseminated.

The Evaluation of Research IG held its P27 session during Breakout 1 about the evaluation of disciplinary and interdisciplinary research. It included 4 lightning talks about disciplinary activities and products, on astronomy, linguistics, crystallography and life sciences. Work is beginning to identify activities and products in a palette of disciplines. You can join and include your input in the spreadsheet if you are interested. You can also join the IG! The talks demonstrated that infrastructures are a transdisciplinary topic, their uptake is one of the useful information to understand their impact- but please do not create another h-index 😉!

5. Presentation connecting to National Data Services IG (5 min) – Andrew Treloar

His presentation slides are included in the meeting slides. A summary is provided below.

Why sustainability matters. Economic argument/human argument/scholarly record argument - research is increasingly dependent on stored data analysed by software using compute platform. Sustainability enables us to reproduce/verify results.

Uptake of DRIs: Communication to National Data Services. Uptake of DRIs will often involve uptake of national data services, directly or indirectly.

Why is uptake and assessment of value important for sustainability. If no-one uptakes and/or values it, why invest in/keep it running? But it is not that simple, e.g. invisible infrastructure, specialised DRIs to meet the needs of a few (highly valued, unsustainable), generic DRIs to meet the needs of many (can be viewed as less valuable, more sustainable investment).

6. Working session on a catalogue of qualitative and quantitative measures of uptake (25 min)

How can we measure these?

Comment: Think about how indicators can be misused, lead to unwanted behaviour etc. Think also about counter-indicators.

Comment: uptake by individuals is different from uptake by a community/communities.

- Use of DRI: by researchers, policy makers and others (number of users, extent and intensity of use)
    - *Type* of users is as important as numbers of users (though there are real challenges as discussed at IDW last year: human user vs human user using bit-torrent vs AI user) [knowing impact in supporting human researchers and use by bots are two different view points]
    - Policy makers may recommend or mandate use of DRI - this is also a form of uptake
    - Inclusion of services e.g. in funding bids, grant applications etc
    - Connection inside and outside disciplines
    - Need to invest in supporting efforts that enable tracking (e.g. PID strategies and then Research Citation Objects to aid the usage tracking to get over the barriers in open literature at the moment)

Website usage, data downloads, IP addresses

- Integration of DRI into research workflows: digital tools become an integral part of research

Publication text mining / infrastructure search in publication databases such as EuropePMC (could also be used for the question above)

- Collaboration and data sharing through DRI: seamlessly connecting research across disciplines

- Production of research outputs using DRI: including traditional and non-traditional research outputs

- Innovation and efficiency: by enabling novel, faster and/or more efficient research

- Capacity building through training: supporting the use of DRI for more efficient and effective use by more researchers

- Policy and investment support: ensuring that the necessary resources are available for research communities to implement and use DRI effectively

- Cost benefit analysis: compare against what could not have been possible without the infrastructure

7. Closing and next steps

- Three take-away messages from today's session:

  1: The current survey contains too many free text questions - this will take too long for people to fill in. We need to review the survey and consider carefully which free-text questions we can replace with multiple choice / drop-down lists, and also invite respondents to let us know if they would like to be part of a focus group / interview cohort so we can capture their more in-depth thoughts. We still plan to test the survey before dissemination and are looking for testers.

  2: For our list of indicators, we should also think about how indicators can be misused, lead to unwanted behaviour etc., and also think about counter-indicators.

3: We will continue to collect more candidate indicators and measures.

- We plan to hold a meeting of the IG in the first half of November to present the outcomes from this session and collect further input from the group members.

- Francoise Genova agreed to become one of the IG co-chairs. We are looking for additional co-chairs for the group! Please talk to Sverker Holmgren (sverker.holmgren@scilifelab.se) or Stefanie Kethers (stefanie.kethers@ardc.edu.au) if you are interested!