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# Contemporary Issues of Open Data in Information Systems Research: Considerations and Recommendations

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# Contemporary Issues of Open Data in Information Systems Research: Considerations and Recommendations

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# Contemporary Issues of Open Data in Information Systems Research: Considerations and Recommendations

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**Abstract:**

Researchers, governments, and funding agencies are calling on research disciplines to embrace open data—data that anyone can access and use. They have done so based on the premise that research efforts can draw and generate several benefits from open data because it might provide further insight and enable individuals to replicate and extend current knowledge in different contexts. These potential benefits, coupled with a global push towards open data policies, bring open data into the agenda of research disciplines, which includes information systems (IS). In this paper, we respond to these developments as follows. We outline themes in the ongoing discussion around open data in the IS discipline. The themes fall into two clusters: 1) the motivation for open data includes themes of mandated sharing, benefits to the research process, extending the life of research data, and career impact; and 2) the implementation of open data includes themes of governance, socio-technical system, standards, data quality, and ethical considerations. In this paper, we outline the findings from a pre-ICIS 2016 workshop on the topic of open data. The workshop discussion confirmed themes and identified issues that require attention in terms of the approaches that IS researchers currently use. The IS discipline offers a unique knowledge base, tools, and methods that can advance open data across disciplines. Based on our findings, we provide suggestions on how IS researchers can drive the open data conversation. Further, we provide advice for adopting and establishing procedures and guidelines for archiving, evaluating, and using open data.

**Keywords:** Open Data, Open Research Data, Open Scientific Data, Open Data in Research, Data Sharing, Open Access to Data, Open Science.

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# 1 Introduction

Around the world, open data initiatives advocate for research data as a public good. Open data creates value because anyone can distil information and gain knowledge from it to improve the wellbeing of society (OECD, 2007). Funding agencies around the world have started requiring that research data from publicly funded research be made openly available. The National Science Foundation (NSF) defines open data as "publicly available data structured in a way to be fully accessible and usable" (NSF, 2016a).

The IS discipline is discussing open data as researchers recognize the value of promoting the publication of research data to validate research results and allowing secondary researchers to analyze data in novel ways to generate unpredictable knowledge (Ribes & Polk, 2014). Other disciplines have also considered open data. One success story is the Human Genome Project and its GenBank, an open data collection of gene sequences (Benson et al., 2015). GenBank has proven to be a valuable resource in biological research, but no comparable infrastructure exists for open data in the IS discipline.

As such, in this paper, we: 1) introduce the discourse around open data internationally and summarize the current discussion around open data in the IS discipline; 2) present consolidated discussions from the pre-ICIS workshop "Issues in Shared and Collaborative Scientific Research" held in Dublin, Ireland, in 2016; and 3) suggest a path forward by learning from partner disciplines to foster a larger discussion in the IS discipline. We conclude the paper with possibilities for the IS discipline to be a leading discipline in the open data movement.

# 2 Open Data in the Global Discourse

A number of developments in the last 20 years have contributed to the emergence of open data efforts, repositories, and policies. In addition to the advent of the Internet, the international open access movement emerged in 2002 (Budapest Declaration, 2002) and has shaped many practices and policies in IS and other disciplines. Open access was first applied to research publications (Budapest Declaration, 2002) and later expanded to include "original scientific research results, raw data and metadata, source materials, digital representations of pictorial and graphical materials and scholarly multimedia material" (Berlin Declaration, 2003, p. 1). The term "open access" remains synonymous for open access to publications, which may include a number of open components (e.g., text, data, or graphics). In this paper, we focus particularly on open data.

Open data efforts have been ongoing in several disciplines. Some of these efforts predate the Internet era. Examples include 1) one of the oldest international open data initiatives, World Data System, established in 1958 in the physics discipline (https://www.icsu-wds.org); 2) GenBank, which was created in 1982 for biological research (Benson et al., 2015); and 3) the Sloan Digital Sky Survey, which has collected images of the sky since 2000 and, in doing so, created "the most detailed three-dimensional maps of the Universe ever made" (http://www.sdss.org).

In 2004, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Committee for Scientific and Technological Policy made a global push for open data (OECD, 2004). Specifically, they stated:

> *Ministers recognised that fostering broader, open access to and wide use of research data will enhance the quality and productivity of science systems worldwide. They therefore adopted a Declaration on Access to Research Data from Public Funding, asking the OECD to take further steps towards proposing Principles and Guidelines on Access to Research Data from Public Funding, taking into account possible restrictions related to security, property rights and privacy.* (OECD, 2004)

The OECD followed up in 2007 with a recommendation called the OECD Principles and Guidelines for Access to Research Data from Public Funding (OECD, 2007) to "increase the return on public investments in scientific research" (OECD, 2007, p. 9) by improving "the efficiency and effectiveness of the global science system" (OECD, 2007, p. 13). The OECD identified many potential benefits of open data and recommended that national governments enact open data laws that are compatible with each other to foster more data sharing.

As with many innovations and data-driven efforts, public bodies and researchers became aware of the conditions that need to exist for open data to lead to meaningful insight. Various stakeholders—such as the individuals and owners of devices that generate data, the organizations that hold the data, the professionals tasked with analyzing the data, and the general public—are only now dismantling

unexpected barriers through a more collaborative effort. In other disciplines, barriers to data sharing are being systematically identified as a means to tackle them in the long term (e.g., van Panhuis et al., 2014).

However, while we have removed some barriers, new concerns about open data, information justice (Johnson, 2014), misinformation, data protection, and data abuse remain (Barry & Bannister, 2014). In order to obtain the expected benefits from open data efforts and to increase its potential, several organizations in different countries have outlined new policies and expectations for open data.

While some of these outcomes are informal recommendations, several countries have established rules for research on open data to guide the access to and management and security of open data. In 2013, the United States' White House Office of Science and Technology Policy released the memorandum *Increasing Access to the Results of Federally Funded Research* (Holdron, 2013). Consequently, as one example, the National Science Foundation (NSF) responded with a public access plan, *Today's Data, Tomorrow's Discoveries*, that requires that all federally funded research projects from 2016 onwards, provide a data-management plan for disseminating and sharing research data (NSF, 2016b). Since 2015, the National Science Foundation of China (NSFC) has required all research papers that result from projects funded by the NSFC be made openly available through the Open Repository of National Natural Science Foundation of China (http://or.nsfc.gov.cn/). In 2015, the European Union started an open research data pilot (https://www.openaire.eu/h2020-oa-data-pilot) to experiment with policies for open data. The EU also adopted the FAIR Guiding Principle (European Commission, 2016) that researchers developed for scientific data management and stewardship; the principle focuses on enabling automation for finding, accessing, interoperating, and reusing (FAIR) data (Wilkinson et al., 2016).

# 3 Method

In response to the emerging global discourse, we believe IS researchers need to understand, participate, and shape the nature of open data. The following methods capture the discussion and identify themes relating to contemporary issues of open data in IS research.

## 3.1 Literature Review

We extensively reviewed IS literature from January, 2014, to November, 2016. We considered the Association for Information Systems (AIS) as the home of the IS discipline and focused on the AIS eLibrary and the Senior Scholars' Basket of Journals, which together include AIS conferences, affiliated conferences, AIS chapter proceedings, special interest group publications, and several journals. We conducted a pilot search and identified relevant search terms. The preliminary analysis of the AIS libraries indicated that the discussion of open data was sparse and relatively new. We expanded the search to resources from partner disciplinary bodies, including the Academy of Management (AoM) and the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). Using NVivo 11 software, we ran a word frequency query and displayed the results in a word tree to identify commonly used word combinations in papers that discussed open data. The results of this query produced eight two-word combinations that commonly appeared together in papers that discuss open data: open data, research data, data sharing, open publication, open access, data access, open research, and open science.

We then used these eight terms to identify relevant papers; we started with the literature referenced in the AIS libraries. The first and second authors read the papers to confirm relevance and used an open coding method to identify themes. To establish preliminary themes and inter-coder agreement, both coders used NVivo 11 software, independently named themes for recurring topics in one paper, and resolved differences through discussion (Creswell, 2013). The coders used the preliminary themes on the remaining papers and discussed changes to the themes to encompass the nuances in the papers.

In the next step, we expanded our search to the AoM and ACM libraries to validate the themes, potentially identify additional themes, and discover seminal works. The complementary search used the same search terms and same time span. The first and second authors applied the themes from the AIS search on the AoM and ACM results and looked for new themes.

## 3.2 Expert Workshop

To advance the discussion on open data in the IS discipline, we posted an open invitation for a workshop to the AISWorld mailing list. Interested researchers met on 10 December, 2016, at a pre-ICIS workshop in Dublin, Ireland (see Appendix A, Figure 1). The workshop provided a platform for researchers from IS and

related disciplines to present their research projects and ideas on how open data was shaping research topics and practices. Participants formed five groups with approximately four people each (see Appendix A, Figure 2). Each presenter gave a 15-minute presentation and, after, the groups discussed various questions on the topic. In each group, one person wrote down all the questions that the group members had after the presentation. Then, each group selected one question for the presenter to address and discuss with the audience. The first author collected all questions not asked in writing and provided them to the presenter after the workshop via email. This process allowed everyone to ask their questions and provide feedback while keeping the discussion with the presenter focused on the most interesting aspects of their work. The first and second authors took notes and identified the appearance of themes from the literature and new themes not found in the literature. Appendix B provides a detailed report of individual presentations. After the presentations, the participants discussed issues of open data, including the development of the Open Community Data eXchange (OCDX) specification (see Appendix C), funding sources for open data, and the themes identified from the literature and from the workshop, which resulted in this paper.

# 4 Results: Open Data Themes in AIS

Using the literature review and workshop discussions, we identified two clusters of themes in the discussion on open data—motivation for open data and implementation of open data—that each contained related themes. The identified themes includes those relevant to and represented in IS research, but also themes in other disciplines that have the potential to impact and shape IS research in this area. We present the findings of themes in the open data discussion below.

The AIS libraries search yielded 76 results, seven of which discussed open data and sharing of research data: one journal paper, one journal editorial, and five conference papers. We looked at partner disciplines housed by the Academy of Management (AoM) and the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) to validate the themes found in the AIS literature. The discussion on open data in the AoM was comparable to AIS in that we found few results. AoM had five abstracts in proceedings; one was for a symposium (Bosco, Steel, & McDaniel, 2014) and one was for a panel discussion (Donia, Jimenez, & Shah, 2015), which indicates that the discussion is young and actively ongoing. Table 1 shows the papers found in each library.

In the context of our analysis, we noted trends of the divergence, convergence, and foci of the work currently available. We found many themes present in AIS also in the AoM abstracts except for the themes of standards and data quality. The discussion on open data in ACM dates back further and includes numerous published papers compared to AIS or ACM. Pasquetto et al. (2015) represented a top search result in ACM: these authors surveyed publications on open data across multiple disciplines, analyzed 10 years of highly cited publications, and identified eight themes. The difference between the ACM themes and the AIS themes primarily concerned terminology. The ACM papers focused on practice and presented empirical evidence: they were either empirical studies that explored the differences in data-sharing practices between academic researchers and non-academic researchers (Pollock, 2016), preliminary results on how a research institution builds data expertise (Thompson, 2015); open data-sharing infrastructure for academics (Cohen & Lo, 2014); citable companions to datasets (Robles et al., 2014), and cases about the practice of sharing and reusing data (Curty, Yoon, Jeng, & Qin, 2016).

After we identified 19 papers (Table 1) across the different libraries, we found that they discussed two broad themes that focused on the motivation for open data and the implementation of open data. We broke down the first theme into four subthemes that motivate or discourage open data: 1) mandated sharing, 2) benefits to the research process, 3) extending the life of research data, and 4) career impact. We further broke down the second theme into five subthemes about issues concerning the implementation of open data: 1) governance, 2) socio-technical systems, 3) standards, 4) data quality, and 5) ethics. The last theme, ethics, emerged from the workshop discussions. Next we describe each theme as found in the literature and summarize concerns and issues that surfaced in the workshop discussions. For better readability, we present the workshop presentation summaries and resulting in-depth questions relating to open data motivation and implementation Appendix B.

**Table 1. Open Data Papers Published Between 2014-2016**

| Library | Paper titles |
|---|---|
| AIS | • "Editorial—Big Data, Data Science, and Analytics: The Opportunity and Challenge for IS Research" (Agarwal & Dhar, 2014)<br>• "Content Category Selection Towards a Maturity Matrix for ICT4D Knowledge Sharing Platforms" (Biljon, Pottas, Lehong, & Platz, 2016)<br>• "Transparent Data Supply for Open Information Production Processes" (Laine, Lee, & Nieminen, 2015)<br>• "Flexibility Relative to What? Change to Research Infrastructure" (Ribes & Polk, 2014)<br>• "Science through the "Golden Security Triangle": Information Security and Data Journeys in Data-Intensive Biomedicine" (Tempini, 2016)<br>• "Modes of Governance in Inter-organizational Data Collaborations" (van den Broek & van Veenstra, 2015)<br>• "A Commons Perspective on Genetic Data Governance: The Case of BRCA data" (Vassilakopoulou, Skorve, & Aanestad, 2016) |
| AoM | • "The 'Big Science' Revolution in Management: POSSIBILITIES, TECHNOLOGY, and Applications" (Bosco et al., 2014)<br>• "Delay and Secrecy: Does Industry Sponsorship Jeopardize Disclosure of Academic Research?" (Czarnitzki, Grimpe, & Toole, 2014)<br>• "Research Crowdsourcing, Data Sharing, and Large-Scale Collaboration" (Donia et al., 2015)<br>• "Democratization or Reflection: The Paradox of Databases' Influences on Knowledge Production" (Paik & Binz-Scharf, 2014)<br>• "Open Data in Industrial R&D: Organizing Open Collaboration between Firms and Public Science" (Perkmann & Schildt, 2014) |
| ACM | • "Academic Torrents: A Community-maintained Distributed Repository" (Cohen & Lo, 2014)<br>• "Untangling Data Sharing and Reuse in Social Sciences" (Curty et al., 2016)<br>• "Toward a Conceptual Framework for Data Sharing Practices in Social Sciences: A Profile Approach" (Jeng, He, & Oh, 2016)<br>• "Exploring Openness in Data and Science: What is "Open", to Whom, When, and Why?" (Pasquetto, Sands, & Borgman, 2015)<br>• "Understanding Scientific Data Sharing Outside of the Academy" (Pollock, 2016)<br>• "FLOSS 2013: A Survey Dataset about Free Software Contributors: Challenges for Curating, Sharing, and Combining" (Robles, Arjona Reina, Serebrenik, Vasilescu, & González-Barahona, 2014)<br>• "Building Data Expertise into Research Institutions: Preliminary Results" (Thompson, 2015) |

## 4.1 The Motivation for Open Data

### 4.1.1 Theme: Mandated Sharing

Several funding agencies have implemented policy changes such that research data be made publicly available. These policy changes encourage open data and are necessary complements to existing technological developments that have enabled data sharing (Vassilakopoulou et al., 2016). Through the funding agencies' requirements, "policy of data ownership has been significantly reshaped, increasingly emphasizing sharing and reuse" (Ribes & Polk, 2014, p. 292). In a different context, research institutions choose to make open data a contingent requirement for choosing laboratories for collaboration and foster a culture of open data (Vassilakopoulou et al., 2016).

### 4.1.2 Theme: Benefits to the Research Process

The research process benefits from open data by allowing secondary researchers to replicate results (Ribes & Polk, 2014). Data sharing and transparency are encouraged since open data provides an opportunity for disproving or confirming research results (Agarwal & Dhar, 2014). The importance of open data in the research process is further evident in reported cases where medical data was no longer shared by a laboratory and researchers asked physicians to share the reported data (Vassilakopoulou et al., 2016).

### 4.1.3 Theme: Extending the Life of Research Data

Research data, when made openly available, can live on outside the collecting research project. Open data allows data users to apply new perspectives and use it for unexpected purposes that can uncover previously hidden details (Laine et al., 2015)—for example, by linking it to other data (Tempini, 2016). The

importance of maintaining open data has secured funding for a research project where the value of the data would have diminished if the knowledgeable researchers had abandoned it (Ribes & Polk, 2014). Open data can be most valuable when people who already know the data or who can familiarize themselves with the data use it, which extends its life (Ribes & Polk, 2014).

### 4.1.4 Theme: Career Impact

Open data can benefit researchers by fostering collaboration, which allows them to learn from one another, to pool resources, and to scale the outcome of their research (van den Broek & van Veenstra, 2015). Researchers can use open data when collecting data is too costly. While much discussion around open data highlights the benefits for researchers, it also notes the downsides or impediments of open data. Not everyone supports the idea of sharing their data openly out of fear of losing a competitive advantage (Vassilakopoulou et al., 2016). On this topic, Ribes and Polk (2014) note:

> *There are good reasons for scientists to be wary of sharing their data. Making data publicly available is often perceived as threatening the epistemic authority and fruitfulness of the scientist who must "give it up:" public data may be reanalyzed, possibly revealing flaws in the analytic method, and scientists may fear "being scooped" if other researchers are able to generate findings from their own data first. Furthermore, making data sharable is an arduous and unrewarding task: data are collected in ways that make them indecipherable to outsiders, organized in ways idiosyncratic to those who collected them, or stored in formats that are not easily transferred. Making data easily shared—interoperable—is laborious and expensive work.* (p. 297)

### 4.1.5 Workshop Discussion

At the ICIS workshop, the motivations for open data resonated with participants and were prevalent in the presentations and discussions. Jordana George (Appendix B) introduced issues with setting up and running data repositories to meet the requirements of mandated sharing. She noted that, when developers design data repositories, they must be mindful of the usability and ease of use for the primary researchers while also considering the need for proper documentation (e.g., authorship, contributors, and use of data complete with report references). Providing such features can have a career impact (a point several workshop participants noted) because data citations can be strong motives for sharing of data. Debora Jeske (Appendix B) highlighted the motivational challenges for interdisciplinary research projects when different funding agencies and academic disciplines generate conflicting requirements that hinder collaboration efforts. Michael Feldman (Appendix B) pointed out that these challenges are heightened when a research project involves crowdsourcing and citizen science. Engaging experts and non-experts to help with analyzing open data is a novel approach that can benefit the research process and allow for unexpected findings beyond the purpose of what the data was originally collected for, but it also creates new managing challenges.

## 4.2 The Implementation of Open Data

### 4.2.1 Theme: Governance

Open data governance is the result of a negotiation between stakeholders (van den Broek & van Veenstra, 2015). Ribes and Polk (2014) provide an example where the negotiation over ownership resulted in an agreement that primary investigators were first authors on scientific findings but not on methodological findings. Data supply and access are also issues of governance. In some instances, researchers freely contribute their data. In other instances, contributing back to a database is a requirement for using open data. The goal of open data is to be accessible by all, but some research data contains sensitive information and requires protection to avoid ethical issues (Tempini, 2016).

### 4.2.2 Theme: Socio-technical Systems

Open data provides the most value when it is "managed by well-defined and quality controlled information production processes" (Laine et al., 2015, p. 3). The need to maintain tools and curate data creates new roles for system administrators and data curators (Ribes & Polk, 2014). The socio-technical system can have an impact on how data is collected (Ribes & Polk, 2014) but allows researchers to judge the quality by providing provenance information (Laine et al., 2015). Tools need to be "accessible and their content

useful to the target audience" (Biljon et al., 2016, p. 1), and even security should not increase complexity for using open data (Tempini, 2016).

#### 4.2.3 Theme: Standards

Standards about representation and metadata simplify data sharing (Ribes & Poll, 2014) and are needed in the creation of quality data to, for example, ensure that labels are used consistently or that time stamps refer to the same events (Laine et al., 2015). A lack of standards can discourage researchers from contributing open data to a database (Vassilakopoulou et al., 2016). Over time, standards in data representation or data collection might change, which requires data transformation to ensure accessibility and comparability between historical and new data (Ribes & Polk, 2014). Metadata standards capture provenance information, such as transformations, the context of data collection, or the original data creator (Laine et al., 2015).

#### 4.2.4 Theme: Data Quality

Data quality intersects with all other themes. The lack of data quality in a database discourages others from contributing their data (Vassilakopoulou et al., 2016). Data quality is improved with metadata, which provides traceability through provenance information on the production process behind a dataset, who created the data for what purpose, how that data was created and manipulated, and what measurement errors or biases it might contain (Laine et al., 2015).

#### 4.2.5 Workshop Discussion

At the ICIS workshop, the issues concerning the implementation of open data resonated with participants and were prevalent in the presentations and discussions. For example, Jordana George discussed the need to carefully design the socio-technical systems that underpin data repositories to ensure data quality (Appendix A). However, some challenges identified at the workshop concerned general data management rather than open data per se. The first challenge identified was a greater degree of diversity in collaborating teams. Interdisciplinary research projects often have to meet certain standards for data representation and understanding (Appendix B). Good design of repositories will be key to facilitate and support these standards. Michael Feldman (Appendix B) pointed out that involving non-academics through crowdsourcing and citizen science yields further design issues. As such, the design of socio-technical systems has to go hand-in-hand with system-specific training, considerations for the research process, and data quality management. The use of knowledgeable teams, researchers, or citizens (non-experts) in open data efforts can generate its own set of opportunities and challenges. The work of one other workshop participant provided further insights in this respect. Gaye Kiely (Appendix B) focused on the management issues that distributed research teams face when interacting with open data. Coordination, knowledge sharing, sustainability, communication, and engendering team cohesion are key goals when managing a research team. As such, governance of a research project, including the negotiation between stakeholders but also the investment of those in the team, depends on how effectively such teams function.

A second challenge concerns researchers' need to effectively coordinate on research and have the willingness to participate in it to begin with. Matt Willis (Appendix B) investigated how collaboration occurs through documents, emails, and other products throughout digital collaboration systems. For researchers to share their collaboration documents, the research project needs to provide a benefit back to them. This kind of data can be easily collected via automated tools that pose challenges for guaranteeing privacy, data quality, and analyzing the data.

#### 4.2.6 Theme: Ethics

Ethics emerged as the third challenge from the presentations and discussions. Ethics is particularly relevant to the properties of open data and was, therefore, added as a theme in the open data discussion. The emergence of ethics raised several issues including questions about how researchers can ensure the anonymity of research participants (Appendix B). These points also reflect our discussion around data quality and standards in data-sharing practice, which includes a protocol for limiting the amount of identifiable information included in files on data repositories while keeping sufficient records to ensure transparency and trust in public bodies (O'Hara, 2012). Informed consent is a prerequisite in many social sciences where deception is used, but the rules and regulations vary across countries and other research disciplines, which causes potential ethical concerns for interdisciplinary research and using open data

(Vitak, Shilton, & Ashktorab, 2016). The issue of ethics in online data research is, therefore, quite pronounced. The workshop participants believed it to be a good practice to obtain informed consent from research participants for releasing anonymized datasets before sharing open data. Doing so is especially critical when automatically collected data may contain personal information such as email addresses or the participants contributed to different datasets (e.g., via wearable devices), which can allow someone to triangulate and identify the participants. This threat to the anonymity of research participants touches on the need to balance the stakeholders' interests and meet data quality concerns while also extending the life of research data.

# 5 Discussion: A Roadmap Forward for Open Data in the IS Discipline

In this paper, we capture the contemporary issues of open data in IS research and provide recommendations to advance open data in the IS discipline. From the literature and the workshop, it is clear that open data is an important component of distributed scientific collaboration and the dissemination and appropriation of the knowledge created through these collaborations. Through analyzing current discussions on open data in IS literature, we identify two main clusters of themes that focus on topics around motivation and implementation. Discussions at the workshop confirmed the themes identified in the literature review and added a new theme to the discussion. We retained this new theme (ethics) as it is particularly pertinent to open data properties and the preparation involved for data to be shared openly. Table 2 overviews the themes.

**Table 2. Current Themes in the Open Data Discussion in the IS Discipline**

| Themes | | Short description |
|---|---|---|
| Motivation | Mandated sharing | Open data is mandated by funding agencies and partner organizations. |
| | Benefits to the research process | Open data advances sciences, allowing studies to be replicated and confirmed or disproved. |
| | Extending the life of research data | Open data is available to research beyond the initial research project and makes other investigations more substantial. |
| | Career impact | Open data has an impact on researchers' careers. A positive impact is that researchers benefit from open data, especially when funding for data collection is scarce. A negative impact is evident in the case of researchers with data who have little incentive to spend the effort required for sharing data. |
| Implementation | Governance | Open data governance is required and emerges from discussions of ownership, access and usage rights, responsibilities, maintenance of dataset, and other issues. |
| | Socio-technical systems | Open data requires an infrastructure of tools, people, and processes, creating new institutions and requirements for research projects. |
| | Standards | Open data standards for describing, representing, labeling, and storing data create value for data users while putting requirements on data creators. |
| | Data quality | Open data quality is a requirement for quality research and mandates that data was generated, cleaned, and prepared using rigorous and documented methods and tools. |
| | Ethics | Open data has ethical concerns for research participants and researchers due to overlap in source materials, new tools, and new methods such as machine learning, triangulation, and de-anonymization. |

## 5.1 Identification of Next Steps for IS: Tackling Sharing Motivation Barriers

While the case for open data is strong and most of the discussion in IS is positive, we will not be able to realize the benefits of open data unless stakeholders lend their support. Many institutions still need to be convinced about the value in publishing and sharing data and reward such activity. Further, the data-sharing benefits for researchers' careers need to be clarified and promoted more widely (e.g., by standardizing and recognizing data citations). Researchers should also seek to educate commercial organizations about the benefits of opening data, especially when doing so could demonstrate environment or social impact (Sayogo et al., 2014). Finally, data-sharing motives are often subject to restricted research time, which limits appraisal priorities (tenure/promotions), and often well-established but potentially inflexible resource conventions in research active institutions. In order to encourage more data sharing, several institutional practices and researcher-specific award, performance, and appraisal schemes would have to be updated to include and recognize open data-related efforts.

Several of the themes in Table 2 may explain drivers of data sharing and actual data-sharing practices. For example, at present, we do not know to what extent extending the life of data will generate positive outcomes for researchers. Similarly, the principle of data governance and data quality has implications for the way researchers conduct research. Data often requires additional effort to prepare it to a standard of quality, detail, and transparency to make it accessible and usable by others. Expenditures for such activities are not standard provisos in most organizations.

The performance criteria that the funders and organizations where researchers work set also influences whether one shares data. As a result, we can expect that many stakeholders will be slow to support and adopt their current procedures in recognition of open data efforts. In these cases, a more collaborative and wider effort of IS researchers may be more effective in encouraging change in their institutions (see more details in Section 5.2). The role of a dean and members of the executive, interview, or tenure review board may have to adapt. In an increasingly time-constrained environment with continually increasing internal and external pressures, the allocation of work, review of performance, and recruitment are all significantly challenging tasks in light of open data.

In many cases, institutions and funders (e.g., National Institutions of Health, see Piwowar, 2011) already have procedures in place for a number of legal, insurance, and risk-management purposes. By engaging a collaborative effort with such groups, IS researchers may be able to address and gain recognition for open data-specific issues and raise the awareness of open data research in their institutions. Such activities may enable IS researchers to strategically connect their concerns to those of their institutions and convince them of the broader benefits. Institutional support for and recognition of IS research on open data from public institutions is more likely when IS researchers work with institutional leaders regarding the benefit of their work for the public, which will help those publicly funded organizations to demonstrate commitment to, social impact on, and engagement with the wider community. Engagement with ethics and other professional bodies and the public at large may be the first steps to gain institutional approval and support for open data research. Table 3 (next page) outlines actionable advice for institutions and researchers that want to adopt and promote open data.

## 5.2 The Potential of IS to be a Leading Discipline in the Open Data Movement

IS has the opportunity to play a major role in how open data are collected, implemented, and analyzed not just in IS but across disciplines. A number of researchers in IS (including several authors of this paper) are already actively engaged in designing and implementing open data repositories, knowledge exchanges, and guidelines for open data management. For IS researchers who are interested in working with open data, we direct their attention to the existing discussions and resources that are available in IS and other disciplines. Our list of references provides one such starting point. In addition, one can learn much from the debate on big data and IS (Abbasi, Sarker, & Chiang, 2016; Agarwal & Dhar, 2014). Books in this area (e.g., Borgman, 2015; Kitchin, 2014) may further support research and curriculum developments and stimulate the engagement with the new challenges that arise for open data both in the field, research centers, and the classroom. Debates with researchers in other fields can help identify concerns, standards (Kansa, Kansa, Burton, & Stankowski, 2010), and resources that are already available in IS and related disciplines, which the list of themes we identified based on the literature review and discussions captured in the workshop demonstrates.

Researchers can shape the conversation around open data and actively use new tools and analytics to make the most use of open data. IS researchers are well positioned with the necessary skills and knowledge to employ open data effectively. Technological means to analyze open data are pioneered in many different fields outside IS, which provides new opportunities for collaboration, testing, and potential starting points for optimization. By embracing interdisciplinary collaborations, IS researchers have the opportunity to apply their knowledge of systems, human-computer interaction, and analytics in other domains traditionally outside the IS discipline. For example, work is already being done on metadata in healthcare (Dugas et al., 2015), and other work has considered the problem of expected data integration problems experienced as disincentive to data sharing among government agencies (Peled, 2011). Simón, Avilés, Botezan, Del Valle Gastaminza, and Serrano (2014) note that ,in line with open data, information professionals need to take on new roles to manage metadata, address questions of licensing, and implement new applications. As such, building joint data repositories focused on open data with healthcare providers, public administrations, and libraries may be distinct opportunities for collaborations.

**Table 3. Actionable Advice for Institutions and Researchers for Open Data Implementation**

| Motivation / Implementation | Mandated sharing | Benefits to the research process | Extending the life of research data | Career impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Governance** | **Institutions:**<br>• Funders establish universal sharing requirements<br>• Publishers support universal sharing requirements<br>**Researchers:**<br>• Be courteous about other researchers' demands and negotiate governance on equal terms | **Institutions:**<br>• Establish best practices and governance for open data in research<br>**Researchers:**<br>• Apply best practices for research project governance | **Institutions:**<br>• Establish standard licenses to simplify the use of data<br>**Researchers:**<br>• Release data under an open license | **Institutions:**<br>• Establish universal and harmonized recognition guidelines for researchers of all disciplines<br>**Researchers:**<br>• Give credit to data creators |
| **Socio-technical systems** | **Institutions:**<br>• Support compliance through university libraries and repositories<br>**Researchers:**<br>• Become familiar with available socio-technical systems | **Institutions:**<br>• Host shared repositories for research-in-progress data<br>**Researchers:**<br>• Access and use open data | **Institutions:**<br>• Provide repositories for long term storage with easy discovery and access for all<br>**Researchers:**<br>• Access and utilize open data outside of discipline | **Institutions:**<br>• Create simple tools for sharing and referencing datasets<br>**Researchers:**<br>• Adopt open data tools for lower barrier to releasing and using open data |
| **Standards** | **Institutions:**<br>• Create common standards for both sharing and reporting to funders<br>**Researchers:**<br>• Have a data dissemination plan consistent with standards<br>• Participate in standardization issues | **Institutions:**<br>• Establish standard procedures for replicating research results based on open data<br>**Researchers:**<br>• Utilize open data standards, allow for replication of findings | **Institutions:**<br>• Establish descriptions and documentation for data structures, provenance, tools, and methods<br>**Researchers:**<br>• Use open data standards to establish provenance | **Institutions:**<br>• Develop standards across disciplines and countries<br>**Researchers:**<br>• Reduce time for sharing data by using standard tools and standard data formats |
| **Data quality** | **Institutions:**<br>• Provide institutional support for sanitizing data across disciplines<br>**Researchers:**<br>• Go beyond the minimum required data sharing to ensure highest data quality | **Institutions:**<br>• Reward replication of research studies that release open data<br>**Researchers:**<br>• Enable new studies by providing quality open data | **Institutions:**<br>• Hire data managers to maintain open data and curate it over time<br>**Researchers:**<br>• Let a data manger maintain dataset as resources permit | **Institutions:**<br>• Implement a peer-review process for publishing datasets<br>**Researchers:**<br>• Use and create quality open data for research |
| **Ethics** | **Institutions:**<br>• Establish data protection, privacy, and author rights as part of data sharing<br>**Researchers:**<br>• Engage in risk assessment prior to sharing data, even in the case of mandated sharing | **Institutions:**<br>• Establish rules on de-anonymizing<br>• Add disclaimers about source of data to reduce privacy risks<br>• Have mechanisms in place to identify and prevent potential ethical concerns before these arise<br>**Researchers:**<br>• Establish best practices and inform risk-management policy | **Institutions:**<br>• Establish rules for open data re-use<br>• Update and harmonize institutional review board guidelines<br>**Researchers:**<br>• Establish common rules on ethics to lower barriers for using open data | **Institutions:**<br>• Update and harmonize code of ethics in all disciplines regarding open data<br>• Require ethics training as a key requirement for cross-institutional collaborations<br>**Researchers:**<br>• Follow best practices to reduce personal risk<br>• Follow ethics procedures to raise contributor confidence |

To advance, the discussion of research opportunities (Abbasi et al., 2016; Agarwal & Dhar, 2014) needs to move towards developing design and funding strategies to support research programs and inter-disciplinary multi-national research collaborations with the capability to connect and respond to the interests of the public, private, and business stakeholders. The themes identified in the paper can serve as starting points for specific research programs.

The new research programs and collaborations may be able to tackle a slew of projects and issues in this area. For example, the study of data accidents deserves more attention, as does the study of the outcomes of leaked data as a means to identify preventive measures. The question of data integration problems (Peled, 2011), accountability, and ethics is one that will have to go hand in hand with open data research and the use of open data repositories. van Panhuis et al.'s (2014) systematic review of data-sharing barriers may be important here. These authors identified technical, motivational, economic, political legal and ethical barriers to data sharing in public health. Barry and Bannister (2014) conducted a similar research project with Irish Government officials. They identified concerns about risks (including abuse and fraud), cultural, and administrative barriers (including security) (Barry & Bannister, 2014). They shared the same concerns as van Panhuis et al. (2014) regarding the legal and economic barriers. A similar investigation may be helpful to dismantle these barriers in relation to IS work and the main concerns of important collaborators in open data research conducted by IS researchers.

Future research could examine the societal, institutional, and research-specific benefits and drawbacks of open data sharing to assess the extent to which the scientific benefits expected by the OECD (2007) and other proponents of open data have materialized and paid off the public investment. Weerakkody, Irani, Kapoor, Sivarajah, and Dwivedi (2017) have called for work to evaluate the performance of open data repositories, acceptance, use, and access of government information by citizens (Yannoukakou & Araka, 2014). Picking up such lines of enquiry appears to be both timely and appropriate given that many open data repositories need public commitment to operate and share data.

Further, it could prove important to identify best practices, tools, and knowledge of regulatory guidelines to ensure success of such open data research programs. Schulte, Chunpir, and Voß (2016) have considered aspects such as data-intensive transportation and grid systems and outlined suggestions for open data practices, provisions, and administration in research. Further knowledge exchanges and collaboration in IS and across different disciplines may prove essential in this process. As became apparent in the pre-ICIS workshop, rapid and often unregulated data accumulation can have unintended consequences for the quality and meaningfulness of data. Additionally, new analytical tools can generate new problems (e.g., de-anonymizing algorithms) by raising new privacy and security concerns among stakeholders (Wood, O'Brien, & Gasser, 2016). Direct outcomes of these developments require the need for more transparency and accountability in how IS researchers handle and use data. We may also need to consider data sharing's indirect effects. Moreover, the open data movement as fostered by public data sharing also raises new concerns about societal impact of what we learn and the contribution of our findings for the public good. Such work is also likely to evoke political, legal, and risk-management issues. Dealing with these challenges may require professional bodies, potentially in cooperation with other professional bodies, to take action by providing guidance or regulation for open data practices.

# 6 Conclusion

In this paper, we discuss open data in the IS discipline. Specifically, we: 1) introduce the discourse around open data internationally and summarize the current discussion around open data in the IS discipline; 2) present consolidated discussions from the pre-ICIS workshop "Issues in Shared and Collaborative Scientific Research" held in Dublin, Ireland, in 2016; and 3) suggest a path forward by learning from partner disciplines to foster a larger discussion in the IS discipline. We distill the insight from these activities into several actionable suggestions in the hope that this report will trigger a dynamic and productive conversation in the wider IS discipline. As we note, open data has the potential to benefit individual scientists, collaborative research groups, research institutions, and society as a whole. While many obstacles remain that thwart open data sharing and collaborations, we provide a starting point for a strategic discussion on how IS can approach, tackle, and become a leading discipline in the open data movement.

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The first two authors equally share 70 percent of the work. We list the presenters and other authors in alphabetical order.

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# Appendix A: Pictures from the Workshop

Pictures are an essential part of any workshop report.




**Figure A1. Group Photo of Most Workshop Participants in Front of the O'Connell House[1]**



**Figure A2. Table Discussion after Each Presentation for Discussing and Collecting Questions[2]**

[1] From left, front row: Sean Goggins, Ann Barcomb, Georg Link, Jordana George, Jeff Parsons; middle row: Souma Ray, Kristen Schuster, Kevin Lumbard, Gaye Kiely, Zeena Feldman; back row: Matt Germonprez, Joseph Feller, Kieran Conboy, Fergal Carton, Michael Feldman, Brian Fitzgerald, Matt Willis, Greg Madey.

[2] From left, table in front: Kevin Lumbard, Matt Willis, Greg Madey, Fergal Carton; Table in middle: Kieran Conboy, Zeena Feldman, Kristen Schuster, Michael Feldman; Left table in rear: Joseph Feller, Jeff Parsons, Souma Ray, Ann Barcomb; Right table in rear: Jordana George, Matt Germonprez, Sean Goggins.

# Appendix B: Presentations at the Workshop

We present the topics discussed at the workshop to: 1) summarize the content of the presentations at the workshop, 2) present questions asked during the discussions to generate thoughts and ideas for future research, and 3) identify the occurrence of themes in presentations and questions to provide a larger perspective on the discussion of open data. The order of summaries below mirrors the order of presentations at the workshop.

## Jordana George: Open Data Sharing and Networking Platforms with an Eye on Data Marketplaces

Jordana George has a unique opportunity to gain insight into the creation of a data repository combined with social collaboration by a newly found benefit corporation, data.world (https://data.world/). A benefit corporation is a for-profit organization with a social mission. The objective of data.world is to build and establish a social, collaborative open data repository where people can find, use, store, and work together on myriad datasets. Anyone can use the data repository to publish datasets and network with users. The website offers dataset descriptions, queries, search functionality, data visualization, personal profiles, and following of other users or datasets. George experiences the open data story firsthand through full access to this organization and its employees through biweekly field visits and access to archives of digital communications such as documents, emails, and chat. George is interested in questions that arise from the development of a social data repository including: why do people choose to share or not share data? What are the differences between required data sharing and volunteer data sharing? What are the challenges to sharing? How can the data be presented in a useful way to users? How can datasets be described and searched uniformly across the broad spectrum of use cases? What are the aspects to operationalizing open data? How about quality?

**Table B1. Audience Questions and Identified Themes for George's Presentation**

| | |
|---|---|
| Audience questions | • How can a data repository track the use of downloaded data by users and potentially make a claim about the social impact from the open data?<br>• How can the trust in the data broker (repository provider) be maintained independently from the open data uploaded by third parties?<br>• How can a researcher show the benefit of open data when acquiring funding?<br>• How can open data related to human data be made safe (i.e. protect the weakest e.g. refugees)?<br>• How can one protect research participants from de-anonymization in open data?<br>• Can a data repository ensure that data is useful and used for social benefit?<br>• How can one overcome the secretive tendencies of corporations and convince them that the benefits of open data outweigh the benefits of keeping data secret as a competitive advantage?<br>• What standards for data and metadata should be used and how do they affect the willingness to share data? |
| Identified themes | • Mandated Sharing<br>• Benefits to the Research Process<br>• Career Impact<br>• Socio-technical Systems<br>• Data Quality<br>• Ethics*<br><br>* A new theme emerged that was not found in the AIS literature: because the organization under study is a benefit corporation, much discussion aligned with the new theme ethics especially as it relates to extending the life of data and ties into data governance. |

## Debora Jeske: Collaborative Research that Crosses Traditional Boundaries of Disciplines

In her presentation, Debora Jeske focused on both opportunities and challenges in interdisciplinary collaboration involving, among others, open data efforts. Interdisciplinary collaborations carry many advantages, specifically those in terms of the use of analytical tools, theory, and existing ethics procedures in some disciplines (ethical approval is becoming a standard feature for many funders and publishers). The decision to share data publicly or use of open data across disciplines and countries may raise ethical concerns (and trigger legal, insurance, and risk management queries). This situation is often exacerbated when the ethical standards for collecting data vary across disciplines and countries, which makes it difficult to collaborate, to conduct research, and to use open data internationally (see Vitak et al., 2016). Further difficulties arise in terms of incompatible archival and publishing strategies (some disciplines and countries have journal lists, others use impact factors, and, in some cases, funders demand open access publications; see also Piwowar, 2011). Misunderstandings can arise due to different conceptualizations of data creators, users, purposeful and agreed (such as consent-given) use of data. Specific rules of funding agencies and non-disclosure agreements between organizations and researchers may also limit or even prevent the sharing of data (see also Sayogo et al., 2014). Overall, however, a consensus emerges across disciplines regarding the need for transparency, ethical deliberation, and the need for caution when sharing results (e.g., Vitak et al., 2016).

**Table B2. Audience Questions and Identified Themes for Jeske's Presentation**

| | |
|---|---|
| Audience questions | • If one ignores the challenges to open data, what does inter-disciplinary collaboration enable?<br>• Relating to who owns, manages, and uses data, can the use of open data be made visible to control and foster ethical use?<br>• How can tensions between commercial use of data and public benefit of shared data be resolved?<br>• How can one deal with biases in open datasets?<br>• How can ethics be reflected in algorithms that automate much of today's lives? |
| Identified themes | • Career benefits or impediments for researchers<br>• Socio-technical systems<br>• Standards<br>• Data quality<br>• Ethics |

## Michael Feldman: Empowering Enthusiasts to Conduct Collaborative Analysis

Evidently, research through crowdsourcing and citizen science can provide a source of unexpected discoveries, leveraged research efforts, and skill development for interested participants. Moreover, Michael Feldman points out that one can further extend the citizen science phenomenon by involving crowds not only in simple tasks such as classification but also in data analysis research. This expectation is timely due to the growing pool of open data that can be of high scientific interest. Unfortunately, good data scientists, who can make sense of data, are very rare and are not available to the amateur scientific community. Feldman explored the question whether non-experts can be involved in data analysis research and how to support non-experts in this endeavor. Feldman proposed to break data analytic related tasks into small coding tasks that non-experts with very basic coding skills can complete. In such scenarios, an expert remotely supervises participants throughout the process and they together achieve the desired outcome. A number of studies have shown that data cleaning, a bottleneck activity of data analysis, is the most promising task to be outsourced in that the crowd and experts produced work with a comparable quality. Future research aims at improving the platform used for collaborative data analysis, investigating what characteristics and requirements tools for collaborative data analysis must meet, and finding an economical break-even point where the crowd results outweigh the task of monitoring the crowd results.

**Table B3. Audience Questions and Identified Themes for Feldman's Presentation**

| | |
|---|---|
| Audience questions | • How can an expert be defined, especially considering the distinction between method and context issues?<br>• What quality checkpoints could be built into the process, to not only check the quality at the end of the process?<br>• How can not only collaborative data analysis be technically enabled but users empowered to it—how to build a learning process?<br>• How can the diverse expertise of crowd workers be managed?<br>• How can people be motivated to participate? How can people be encouraged to play with the data and improve their skills?<br>• How can the narrow scientific focus of a research study be balanced with the broad social impact that citizen science aims for?<br>• How does outsourcing parts of the data analysis affect research because data cleaning and other data operations have been a source of thought and ideas for scientists? |
| Identified themes | • Benefits to the research process<br>• Extending the life of research data<br>• Career impact<br>• Socio-technical systems<br>• Data quality |

## Gaye Kiely: Practical Experience of the Barriers to Effective Collaborative Virtual Work

Gaye Kiely focuses on the relationship of open data with distributed work. Drawing on her doctoral research on global distributed team coordination and experience of working as a software quality engineer in a distributed team, she examines the issues associated with remote collaboration. Distributed collaboration, especially in software development, has received much attention in previous research (particularly, the impact of geographical distance, temporal distance, cultural diversity, and team trust). While distributed software development teams have different goals to distributed scientific research teams, they share common challenges such as coordination, knowledge sharing, sustainability, and communication. Collaborative research teams need to be formed with consideration for the qualities and skills of the team members and specific open data challenges. The research team needs to be managed to ensure continuous operation and future sustainability. Issues of fatigue, isolation, and negative effects must be addressed, especially when collaborative research teams involve volunteers. Further, contemporary collaboration tools appear to bridge the gaps of geographical and temporal distances but do not fully address more "fuzzy" issues such as cultural diversity and the engendering (and maintenance) of team cohesion. As such, Kiely calls on the research community to draw on existing research in global distributed team work in order to identify solutions for collaborative, open data research teams with respect to coordination and sustainability.

**Table B4. Audience Questions and Identified Themes for Kiely's Presentation**

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| Audience questions | • How can one study the end of a project when people walk away (think ghost town on the Internet)?<br>• How can momentum be maintained when tasks in a collaboration are divided into small tasks?<br>• What is easier to maintain: the momentum of a collaborative project or its long-term vision and goals? What other processes (e.g., peer production) face issues of motivation that can be learned from?<br>• How can individual work be aggregated into a coherent end-product?<br>• What is more important to a sustainable team, the collaboration processes or the combination of people?<br>• How can the team selection findings from the well-researched human resources literature be implemented in online crowds and collaborative research projects? |
| Identified themes | • Governance<br>• Socio-technical systems |

## Matt Willis: Distributed Scientific Teams and Conducting Collaborative Science

Matt Willis' interest is in improving the design of collaborative science by studying the collaborative structures distributed teams create through their work practices. The approach used in his research views documents as a data source to better understand distributed team dynamics and how these document structures support distributed scientific teams. With a focus on social scientists, his team is studying the socio-technical systems of small-scale collaborations. They theorize documents as anything written down that contains meaning for the group such as emails, whiteboards, notebooks, scraps of paper, drafts of manuscripts, documents from repositories, phone records, data from social media platforms, and trace data from collaboration platforms such as GitHub, Dropbox, figshare, and SharePoint. As socio-material, these documents are part of social experiences and are imbued with meanings due to being rooted in scientists' daily practices (Østerlund, 2008). Initial findings suggest issues arise from misaligned practices around document version control and naming conventions. Additional conflicts to distributed collaborations arise from coordinating software choices and what platforms the collaboration use. For example, some group members may use Google Docs for writing and others use Microsoft Word. The differences in these software packages and platforms create various problems and incompatibilities in collaborative groups. The research has also found that lack of documentation creates problems with collaborative data analysis, particularly with qualitative data. Research teams that use open data face the same issues and can benefit from considering naming conventions, dataset versioning rules, and documentation of tacit knowledge that one cannot easily understand without conducting a meeting—especially when data are qualitative in nature or contain interpretive aspects. Willis pointed out ethical considerations for collecting social data and implications that led to not sharing the data. The prime ethical concern being how inextricable work and personal lives have become, which makes it impossible to look at work emails and documents without also understanding individuals' personal and private lives.

**Table B5. Audience Questions and Identified Themes for Kiely's Presentation**

| | |
|---|---|
| Audience questions | • How can informed consent be acquired without burdening research participants?<br>• How can the complete communication be collected into the research database?<br>• How should non-work related communication be treated, such as emails with family?<br>• Should the data collection be automatic or controlled by the research participant?<br>• What value can researchers provide to the participants in return for sharing the data (e.g. metrics from data)?<br>• How can best practices for collaborative research teams be distilled from the collected data? |
| Identified themes | • Socio-technical systems<br>• Standards<br>• Ethics |

## Appendix C: OCDX: A Metadata Initiative to Advance Open Data

As part of the workshop, we introduced participants and then discussed with them the approaches being developed by the Open Community Data Exchange (OCDX), a metadata specification to describe research datasets (http://ocdx.io/). OCDX defines a bill of materials (OCDX document) that one can attach to computational social science research data. Kristen Schuster and Matt Germonprez presented and facilitated the discussion around the OCDX initiative. The OCDX document conveys information about the research data, such as when it was collected, where it was collected, where to acquire the dataset, what license it is published under, and who the original data creator is. OCDX documents can be automatically processed, searched, and stored, which allows researchers to make their datasets available and discoverable. The workshop discussion on OCDX resulted in several recommendations and concerns:

1) Describing a dataset is a best practice among researchers for maintaining the usefulness of a dataset by documenting how, when, and where data was collected and how it was manipulated. The practice of maintaining a README file for each dataset could be standardized through the OCDX specification, which can reduce barriers for releasing the dataset.
2) Data licensing is an important consideration for sharing research. Creating a standard license list as a complementary product to the OCDX specification can simplify describing and choosing a license for open data.
3) Providing a consistent way to reference a dataset (i.e., unique identifier such as DOI) provides a way to ensure standards and data quality (Sayogo et al., 2014). When a derivative dataset alters, combines, or enhances a dataset, it should reference the original datasets to provide a trail of origin (provenance information).
4) Open data and their associated metadata need to be findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable (FAIR) to satisfy the FAIR Guiding Principle (Wilkinson et al., 2016) adopted by the European Union Commission in 2016 (European Commission, 2016). Such data will increase the likelihood that open data is not just discoverable but used while increasing the research and sharing benefits for funders and researchers.

## About the Authors

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**Kevin Lumbard** is a doctoral student studying Information Technology at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. As a former web developer, he is experienced in developing and managing eCommerce applications and processes for small to medium sized companies. Kevin is interested in open collaboration communities, open source applications for small businesses, and project management in distributed environments. His current research interest includes the movement of individuals among organizations engaged in open source development, information sources used in open source design, and exposures of sharing and linking open data.

**Kieran Conboy** is a professor in information systems and leader of the Lero Irish software research centre at NUI Galway. He previously worked for Accenture Consulting and the University of New South Wales in Australia. He has worked with organisations such as Atlassian, Cisco Systems, Dell, Suncorp, and Ericsson, as well as many SMEs. Kieran has published over 180 papers in leading international journals and conferences including *Information Systems Research*, *European Journal of Information Systems*, *Journal of the Association for Information Systems,* and the *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*. A key focus of his current research is the examination of flow, agility, temporality and openness in organisations. He is on the board of the Irish Research Council, an editor of the *European Journal of Information Systems* and has chaired many international conferences in his field.

**Michael Feldman** is currently pursuing a doctoral studies in Computer Science at University of Zurich. He holds an M.Sc. in Industrial Engineering and Management from Ben Gurion University with a focus on Information Systems. In his recent research, Michael is studying the potential of crowdsourced collaborative data analysis. Specifically, he is fascinated with the idea of enabling diverse crowds with limited coding skills to participate in full, end-to-end data analysis projects. In his research, Michael draws from both organizational psychology as well as technical foundations.

**Joseph Feller** is Professor of Information Systems at the Cork University Business School, University College Cork, Ireland. His research focuses on how individuals, organizations, and societies can use IT to leverage collective intelligence, action, and resources. His work has appeared in journals such as *Information Systems Research*, *Journal of the Association of Information Systems*, *Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, *European Journal of Information Systems*, *Journal of Information Technology*, *Information and Organization*, and *Information Systems Journal*. He served as founding President of the Special Interest Group on Open Research and Practice (SIGOPEN) of the AIS from 2015-2016.

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**Matt Germonprez** is currently a faculty member at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Prior to joining UNO, he was a faculty member at UW-Eau Claire, Case Western Reserve University, and a PhD student at the University of Colorado–Boulder. His research focuses on theory and method development and investigation with particular focus on emerging and tailorable technologies. In particular, he explores how these new, user-centered technologies are designed and used in practice from the individual to the enterprise level. His work has been funded by the National Science Foundation and accepted in *MIS Quarterly*, *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, *Information Systems Journal*, *Information & Organization*, and *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*.

**Sean Goggins** is an Associate Professor at the University of Missouri in the Computer Science department. He teaches, publishes, and conducts research on the uptake and use of information and communication technologies by small groups in medium to large scale sociotechnical systems; from

Facebook, to online course systems. Sean conceptualizes "group informatics" as a methodological approach and ontology for making sense of the interactions between people in medium to large scale social computing environments. Sean spent 12 years as a software engineer and architect in industries ranging from medical devices to online publishing before pursuing his Ph.D. After four years at Drexel University in Philadelphia, he moved to Missouri in the fall of 2013, where he continued his work, and launched a new masters degree program in data science in the fall of 2016.

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**Gaye Kiely** is a lecturer, researcher and co-director of BSc. Business Information Systems at University College Cork (UCC), Ireland. She holds a BSc in Business Information Systems (1998), an MSc (Research) on software lifecycles (2001), and a PhD on Global Virtual Team Coordination (2012). Her research interests have centered on global virtual software development teams, distributed collaboration, development methods and coordination. More recently, her research focus has turned to open data, collaborative work, and community sustainability.

**Kristen Schuster** is a lecturer in digital curation in the Department of Digital Humanities at King's College London. Her research and teaching focus on the role metadata plays in interdisciplinary data management projects.

**Matt Willis** is a researcher at the Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford. His current work looks at the use of automation technology in NHS England general practice services. Other work include socio-technical inquiry into personal health record use between patients and care teams. His research interests include patient-generated data, socio-technical systems in healthcare, computer supported cooperative work, social shaping of technology, and human-computer interaction in healthcare. He has been a researcher in academic, government, and private institutional settings including Sandia National Laboratories, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and several university affiliated research centres where he was a contributor to multiple grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF), National Institutes of Health (NIH), Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), and Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity (IARPA).

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