Data Stewardship: Professional Networks for Lifelong Learning

Curtis Sharma

Hungarian Open Science Forum

17 April 2024

Skills 4 eosc

- Skills for the European
- Open Science
- Commons

Supporting eosc

Co-funded by the European Union

UK Research and Innovation

Skills4EOSC Project Objectives

Advance Open Science (OS) skills by unifying the current training landscape into a common and trusted pan-European ecosystem

Closing 3 gaps

1. Lack of Open Science and data expertise

2. Lack of a clear definition of data professional profiles and corresponding career paths
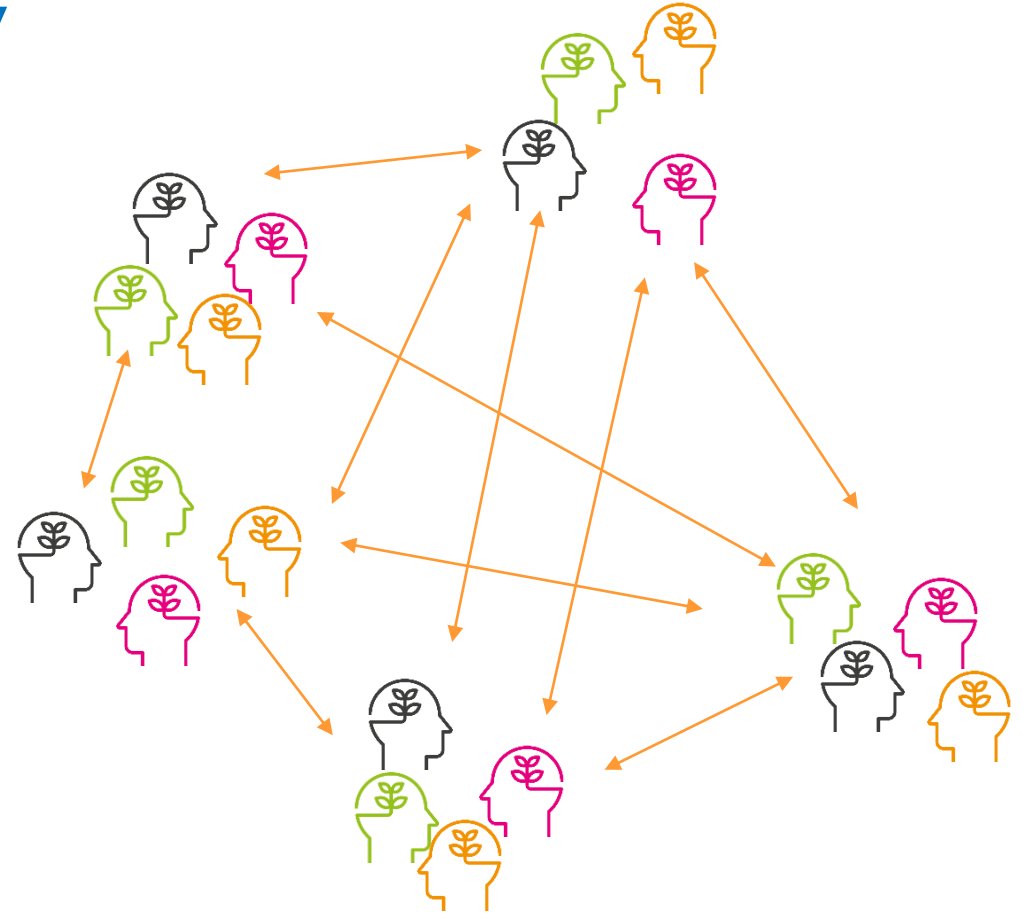
3. Fragmentation in training resources.

Professional Networks for Lifelong Learning - Task 6.3.1

- Harmonising and fostering the creation of new Data Steward networks

Network/Community

- Deficit in formal training

- Solutions through discussion

- Cross-pollination of ideas

- Exchange of good/best practices

- Resource dissemination

- Platform for new opportunities

- New developments, etc

- Shape own identity/role

- Amplify voices/raise awareness

Role of Skills4EOSC

- Professional Profiles

- Identify gaps – where networks do not exist

- Stakeholder engagement in context – is network feasible/desirable

- Coalesce initiatives – bringing local efforts/indiviudals together

- Core team - Steering Committee

- Tools – Network Starter Kit/Playbook, etc

- Harmonisation of networks – cross pollination of ideas, etc as in previous slide

- National Competence Centres – support and sustainability

Who is a Data Steward?

The "data steward" is a professional figure competent for supporting researchers in the responsible planning and managing of research data throughout its life cycle.

Overall, "data stewards"

- have prior knowledge of how data is collected and managed in a specific research domain, perhaps because they have a PhD in that field;

- have advanced concepts of programming, database management, research infrastructures, data security, legal and ethical aspects of data management and sharing;

- have good communication, educational and organisational skills;

- have or wish to pursue a career path that combines research and research support

The concept, functions and activities of a data steward very often depend on the institution where they are employed. Nevertheless, the underlying theme is that the data steward is a figure with (at least one or more) transversal skills in the management of research data (disciplinary, IT and technical, legal) and very often acts as a bridge between researchers (i.e. producers and users of research data), infrastructures, and research organisation.

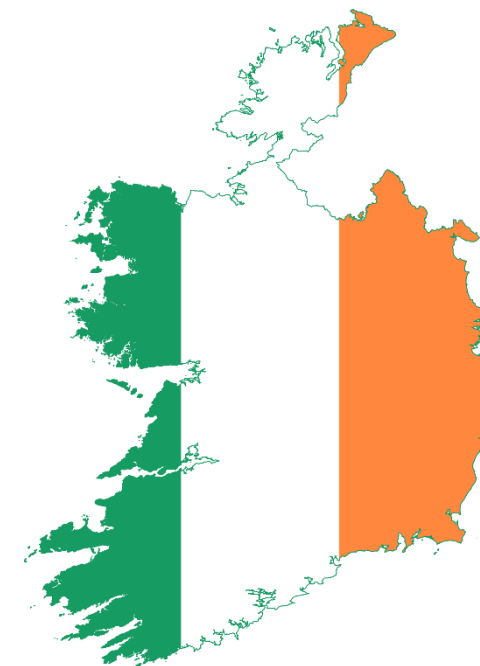# New Data Steward/RDM Networks

All images

Bologna & IIT Genoa, supported by ICDI

SND, Umea (Swe), CSC (Fin), UiT, HKDIR (Nor), DTU, DKB (Den), DATICE (Ice)

MINHO, Iscte, Coimbra, supported by FCT-FCCN

UCC & SONRAI, supported by NORF

Skills 4 eosc

Supporting eosc Funded by the European Union

Development of the Italian Network

- Skills4EOSC EU Survey: Mapping of professionals supporting RDM in Italy
  - "Definition" of Data Steward
  - 11 Questions with multiple choice options, 1 free text

- In your institution, are there professionals responsible for the research support functions that we have described in the definition of 'data steward'?

- Are these figures formally identified as "data stewards"?

- What is the role of the "data stewards" or equivalent figures within your institution?

- At which level of organisation are they framed?

- What kind of training do the "data stewards" or equivalent figures have within your institution?

- What kind of support do the "data stewards" or equivalent figures provide within your institution?

mattjeacock_iStock

Development of the Italian Network

- 55 Respondents, 40 institutions

- Kick-off meeting 7 November – 50 attendees, now 70 members
  - Who is a Data Steward? What is the organisational profile?
  - Sustainability of roles (career paths, permanence vs project-based)
  - Capacity and training for thematic/discipline-specific RDM

  - **Support from ICDI (Designated Skills4EOSC National Competence Centre)**
    - Infrastructure and hosting
    - Event organisation
    - Publicity and advocacy

Development of the Italian Network

- Pilot Skills4EOSC DS Network Starter Kit

- Mailing list – main communication

- 2 voluntary co-leads

- Online meeting every 2 months, 1 hour long
  - Topic of interest presentation, e.g. standardisation of DMPs in Italian institutions
  - New and newsworthy, e.g. developments, opportunities, new tools
  - Trainings
  - Collaboration, workshops, etc

- Visibility through ICDI News

Italian Network – Challenges and Solutions

- Large group, low active participation – core active group
- Many important issues do not reach resolution
  - Need a more effective communication platform – likely Slack
  - Need to uncover and address possible barriers to participation
  - Working groups to be set up to address specific issues
  - Need to better plan online meetings – maybe 2 hours needed
- Capacity - too much work for only 2 people
  - Steering Committee being put in place to be finalised at in-person meeting (today!)
- Staying connected and motivated
  - In-person meeting twice yearly
  - Working with other OS bottom-up groups, e.g. Italian Reproducibility Network
- Limited by ICDI Website
  - Distinct website or autonomous pages to be discussed

Networking and Knowledge Exchange

- A global community within the RDA PDS IG

- Data stewards and others working in RDM can seek and offer support to each other, addressing commonalities and collaboration, etc.

- Support the conception and creation of new national/regional DS and RDM networks

- Encourage and facilitate the exchange of ideas/knowledge across networks

- Disseminate information, tools and developments in RDM and data stewardship

Links and Resources

- [D2.1 Skills4EOSC Open Science career profiles](#)

- [D6.1 Mapping of Professional Networks](#)

- [D6.1 Skills4EOSC Data Steward Network Starter Kit](#)

- [D7.1 Competence Centres Landscape & User Support Activites](#)

- [RDA professionalising data stewardship IG](#)

- [Skills4EOSC Fellowship Programme](#)

- [DTL Data Stewards Interest Group (Netherlands)](#)

- [FRDN Belgium (Vlanders)](#)

- [FDM Thuringen, Germany](#)

- [Elixir UK](#) (life sciences only)

Skills 4 eosc

- Skills for the European
- Open Science
- Commons

Thank you!
Questions?

Curtis Sharma
Project Manager/Community Manager, Skills4EOSC
4TU.ResearchData TU Delft Library
C.J.M.Sharma@tudelft.nl