

Helmholtz Open Access

Open Access to Data

Sünje Dallmeier-Tiessen, Hans Pfeiffenberger

Research Data

Data production and interpretation is part of the research life cycle. Both are very work- and cost-intensive, but only the interpretation and discussion of the data is preserved in (journal) publications. In the past only little attention was given to the preservation of and access to research data – which is regrettable as they are of interest for the scientific community now and in the future. Thinking of potential reuse of data for replication, correlation with other data or for further interpretation – all will contribute to an improvement of the quality of research. So why spend enormous amounts of money on data production, but almost none on preservation and data access?

How to achieve future reuse?

Making data accessible for future reuse implies different prerequisites such as a long-term preservation strategy for data, persistent access to data and quality assessment of the data to be stored. Thinking one step further – it needs scientists to publish their data and a sustainable organisational and technical infrastructure to maintain the data and make it accessible.

Helmholtz Open Access: Open Access to Data...

... is one of the major themes of the Helmholtz Open Access Project. This project aims to raise scientists', information specialists' and policy makers' awareness of open access to data via manifold internal and external activities. Moreover, the project members work towards a successful data publication strategy, which includes policies, infrastructures and of course scientists publishing their data (across disciplines).

Activities

- Documentation of best practice
- Assessment of discipline-specific needs
- Policy development: how to handle research data?
- Contributions to international projects and initiatives
- Internal and external networking
- Placing of information and presentations in the scientific community
- Internal and external workshops
- Focus/Study: Quality controls in data publication
- Focus/Study: Data publication – existing strategies and future needs
- Focus/Study: Data publication – Earth System Science Data, A Data Publishing Journal (please check separate project poster for details).

Focus:

Open Helmholtz Workshop on “How to deal with research data”



On the 18th and 19th Sept. 2008 a workshop “Umgang mit Forschungsdaten” was held in the “Haus der Wissenschaft” in Bremen. 65 scientists, librarians, representatives of funding agencies and data centres met to discuss the today's and the future's policies for research data.

1st Day – Keynotes:

The first day was structured by 4 keynotes by Dr. Malcolm Read, Dr. Manfred Nießen, Prof. Heinrich Miller and Prof. Alexander Lerchl who discussed research data in different disciplines such as geoscience and social science and from different perspectives of their organizations.

2nd Day – Workshops and Discussion:

The second day was dedicated to intense discussion in more specialized working groups. The 4 working groups focused on: Technical Infrastructure, Organizational Aspects, Quality Assessments and Open Access and Good Scientific Practise versus Reward Systems for Scientists. The workshop showed that the field of research data is diverse. Some issues appear to be independent of the discipline and may be solved with a general approach. But it is crucial to see the individual characteristics and demands of research data in each discipline.



Helmholtz Association:

The Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres contributes to solving major challenges facing society, science and the economy with top scientific achievements in six research areas. With 26,500 employees in 15 research centres the Helmholtz Association is Germany's largest scientific organisation.

Mission:

We contribute to solving grand challenges which face society, science and industry by performing top-rate research in strategic programmes in the fields of Energy, Earth and Environment, Health, Key Technologies, Structure of Matter, Transport and Space.

Website:

<http://oa.helmholtz.de>

Picture credits:

AWI, GFZ, GKSS

Presented on occasion of Berlin 6, Open Access Conference at Dusseldorf, Germany 11-13 November 2008