CWTS
Meaningful metrics

CARING FOR COVID-19 DATA
SUSTAINING OPEN DATA INFRASTRUCTURES

Doing open research is more than just knowing how.

Understanding research cultures and sustaining open infrastructures are crucial too.

Kathleen Gregory
March 6, 2026
Open Research Week 2026

Universiteit Leiden

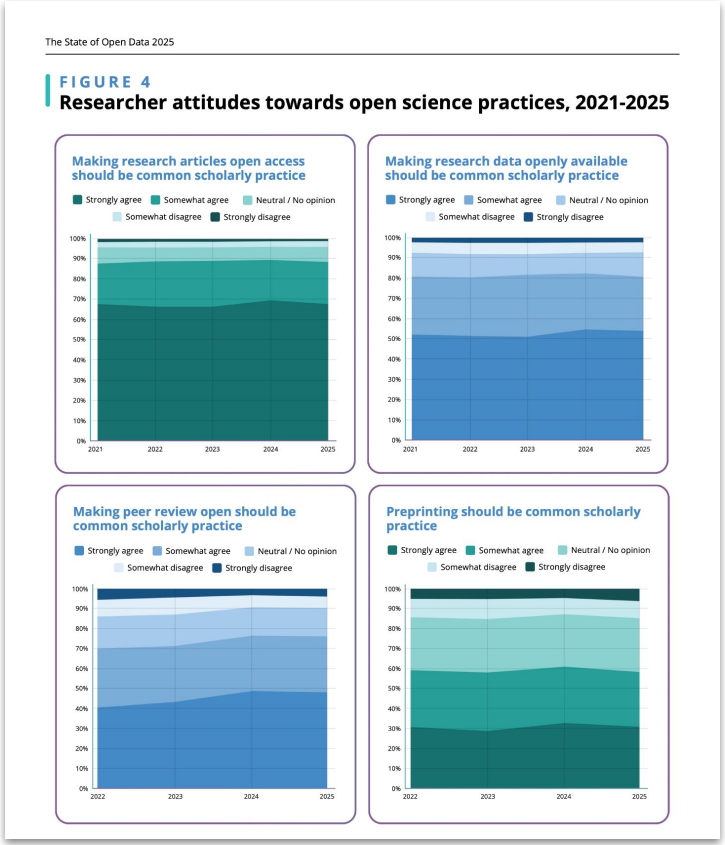
NWO

Much progress

Increase in available open content

Development of local & (inter)national policies

Changes in researchers' attitudes



Digital Science et al., 2026

Many points of friction

Sociotechnical challenges

Local contexts, within broader systems

A relational way of thinking about OS is needed

Disciplinary & epistemic diversity

Borgman, 2015; Leonelli, 2022

Unequal access (also to OS tools)

Shanahan & Bezuidenhout, 2022

Assessment cultures

Alperin et al., 2020; Gregory et al., 2026

Funding models

Eschenfelder & Shankar, 2022

Sustainability & resilience

Gregory et al., 2026; Bosman & Sondervan, 2025

Knowledge security

Dutch Research Council, 2025

AI concerns

Kochetkov, 2025

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Knowledge security

NWO, 2025

AI concerns

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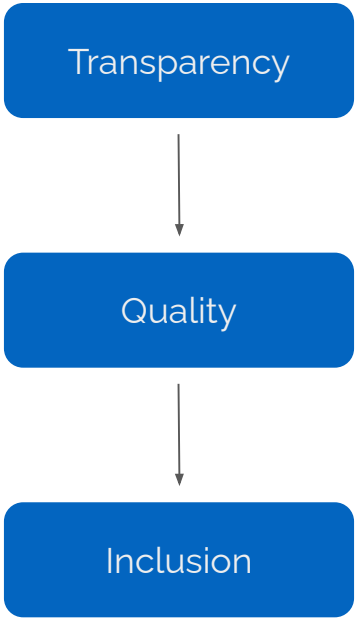
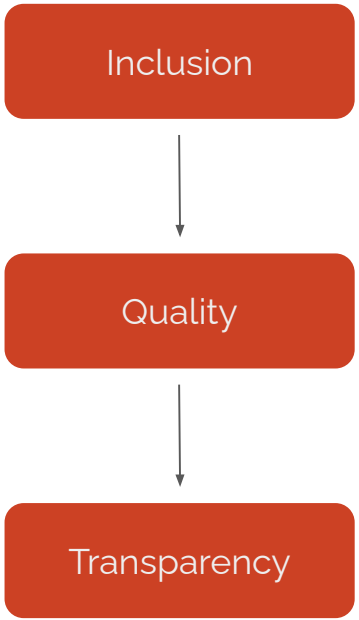
Traditional perspective: Openness as sharing
An object-oriented view

Unlimited
Digital
Good
Global
Equal
Focused on itemized outputs
(objects that can be shared)



Leonelli, 2023

Relational perspective: Openness as connections
A process-oriented view



Relational
Social
Divisive
Situated
Equitable
Focused on social agency (ways of doing and being with others)

Leonelli, 2023

Open Research

Foregrounds context, practices, and diversity

Openness is not just about putting content online.

It is a matter of **considered relationships**.

What to share, when, with whom? Which relationships?

Practicing open research is more than just knowing how.

A ‘relational’ view provides insights into how to progress open research.

Epistemic diversity & funding models

From local to systemic concerns

1. **Understanding research cultures**
   Data practices in ethnographic research

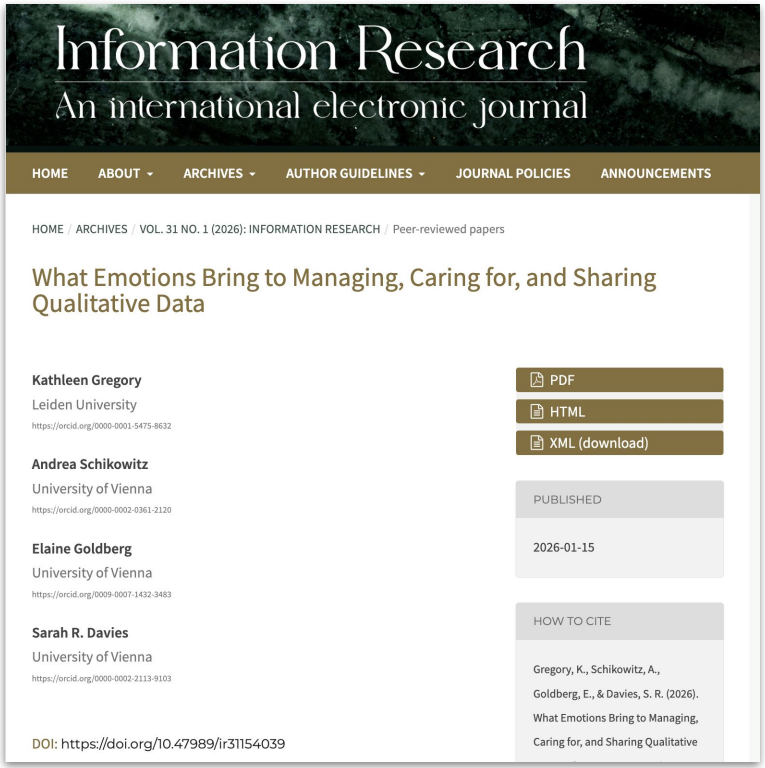
2. **Sustaining open infrastructures** Cultivating careful relationships and funding streams

Understanding research cultures

Data practices in ethnographic research

How do (qualitative) researchers relate to and care for their data?

An autoethnography of data practices



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What Emotions Bring to Managing, Caring for, and Sharing Qualitative Data

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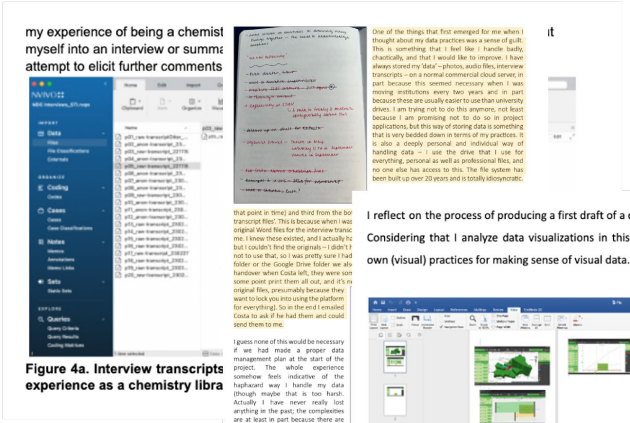
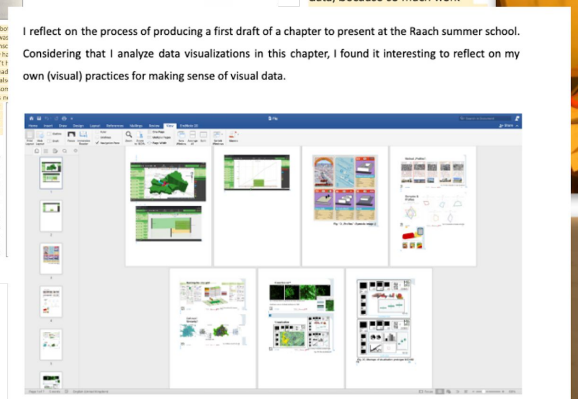
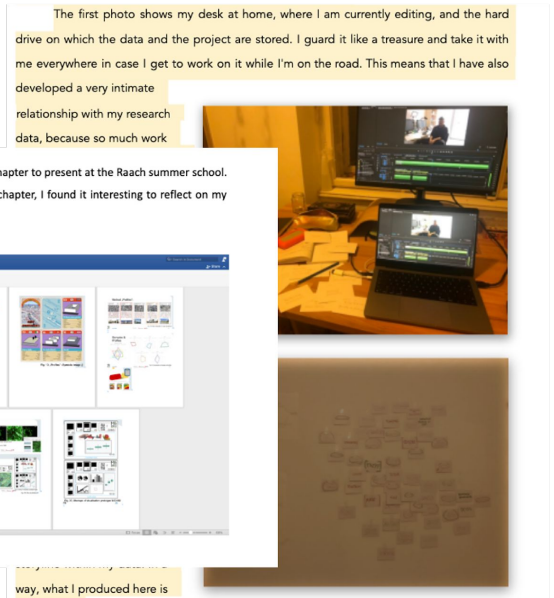
Gregory et al., 2026

How do (qualitative) researchers relate to and care for their data?

Why does data sharing not happen as may be expected?







Our relationships with data

*I notice how I build up a relationship with my data that changes over the course of the research project: first there is **pride** at having collected and stored so much data, then **overwhelm** at having to sift through and process it all, **frustration** when something goes wrong, which is usually the case, and **always concerns** about the rights of the data. **Finally, when you work with them every day, they become part of your thinking and working.***

Data work is emotion work.

Guilt, shame, vulnerability

Tensions with personal visibility

Emotions a feature, not a bug

*In these transcripts, I am **very visible** in the data, not just as an interviewer, but also through comments about my own experiences, my preferences, and my ways of communicating [..] I have to wonder - **how much of myself do I want to make visible to a wider public?** [..] **Sharing this type of data, where I am so visible, would make me feel very vulnerable**.*

Caring for data by caring for research participants

Tensions with removing data from researchers' care

*When using a quote or writing up an argument, I always **check that against the personal relation I have** to the materials. **I use my emotions towards it as a test** of the 'validity' and the morality of that claim – if it feels appropriate or not.*

Caring for data by caring for maintenance & infrastructure

Tensions with recommended systems & short-term employment, with security & usability

I have always stored my 'data' – photos, audio files, interview transcripts – on a normal commercial cloud server, in part because this seemed necessary ***when I was moving institutions every two years*** *and in part because these are* ***usually easier to use*** *than university drives. I am* ***trying not to do this anymore*** *… but this way of storing data is something that is very bedded down in terms of my practices.*

What does this mean for progressing open research?

Various tensions in the material

- With concern about letting data out of our care
- With infrastructural concerns
- With notions of what data sharing could look like
- With objective expectations and messy reality

How could it be different?

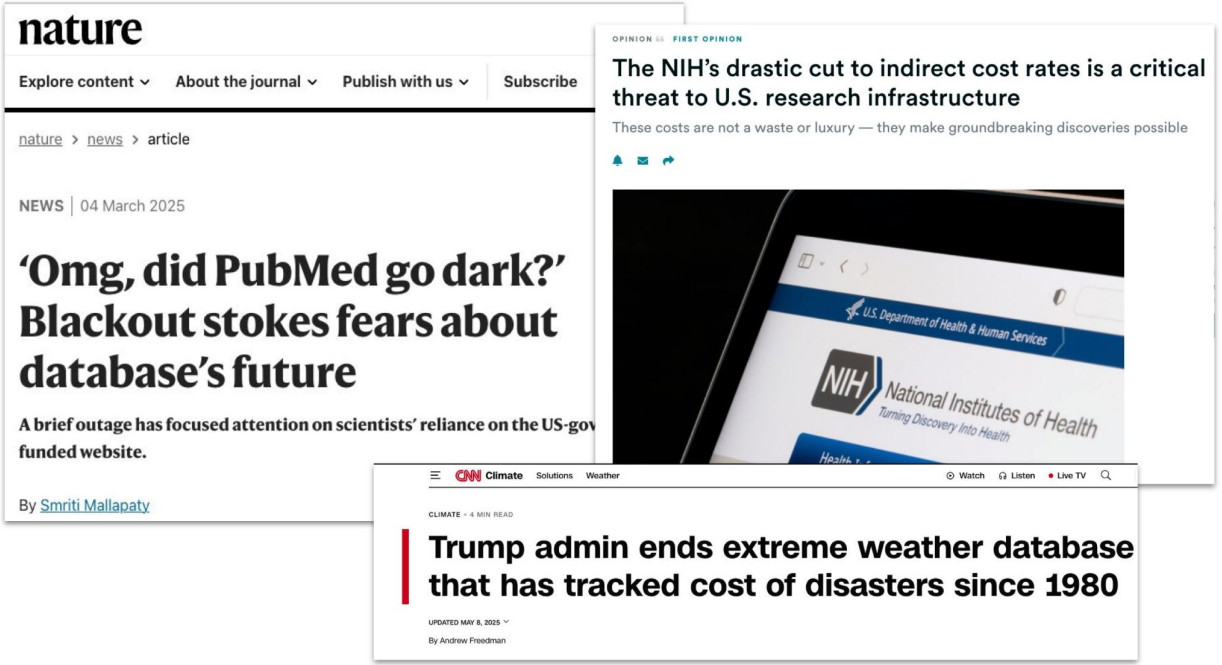
Designing with and for emotions

- Encouraging future relationships with data (for data producers as well as reusers)
- Flexibility & diversity in data sharing (also in teams)
- Speaking different languages: data care plans?

Sustaining open science infrastructures

Cultivating careful relationships
(and funding streams)

Open infrastructures are not as stable as we may think.



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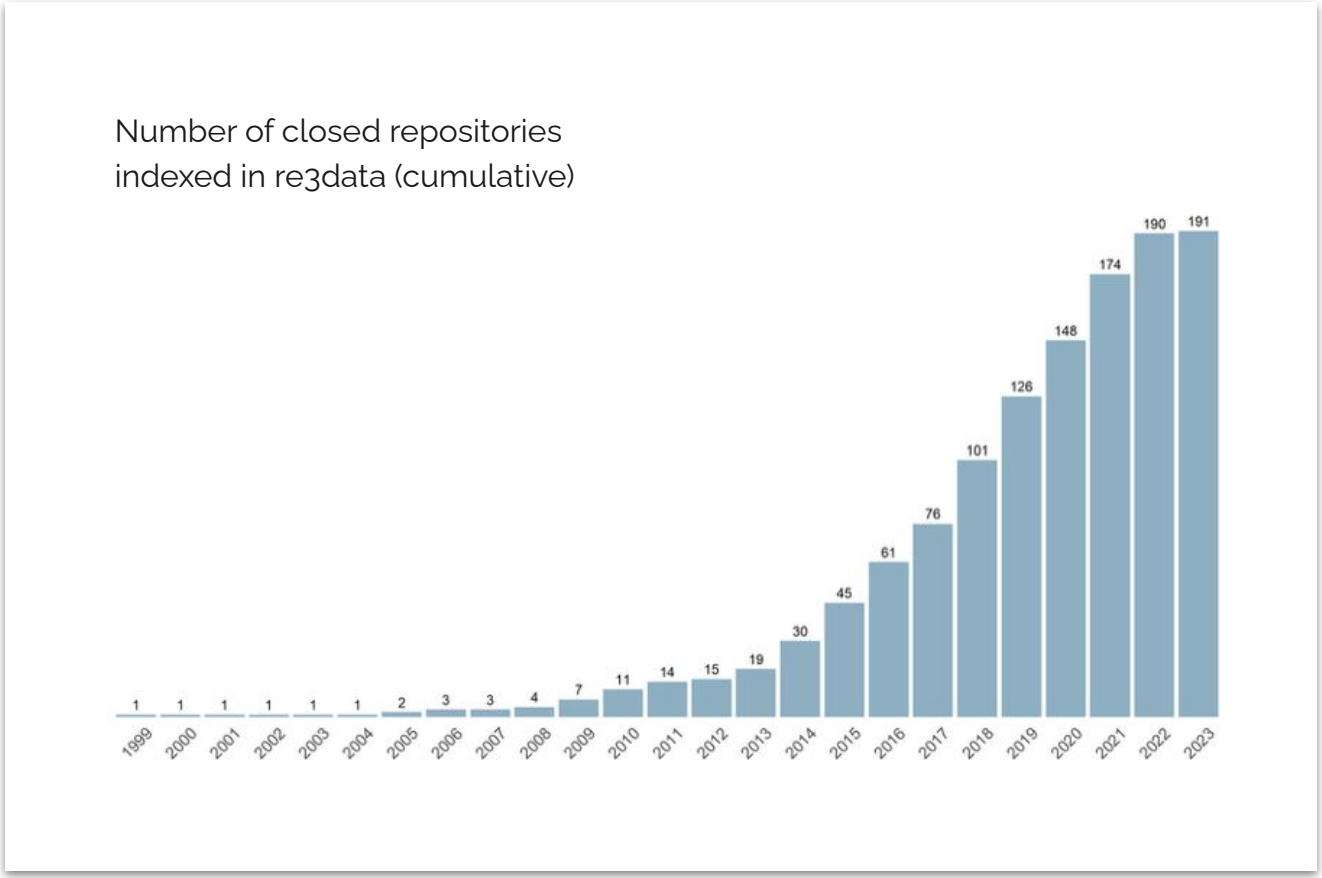


Strecker et al., 2023

Open infrastructures are not free to operate.

Reliance on project funds (especially in early stages)

Reliance on federal funds

Need for diversity of funding streams

But no secret sauce - and funding infrastructures is just not sexy

Skinner et al., 2025; OECD, 2017

Dryad is an open data publishing platform and a community committed to the open availability and routine re-use of all research data.

Methods

- Document analysis of open blog posts, web materials
- Descriptive data analysis
- Semi-structured interviews (n=14), with Dryad board members and staff
- Coding, thematic analysis

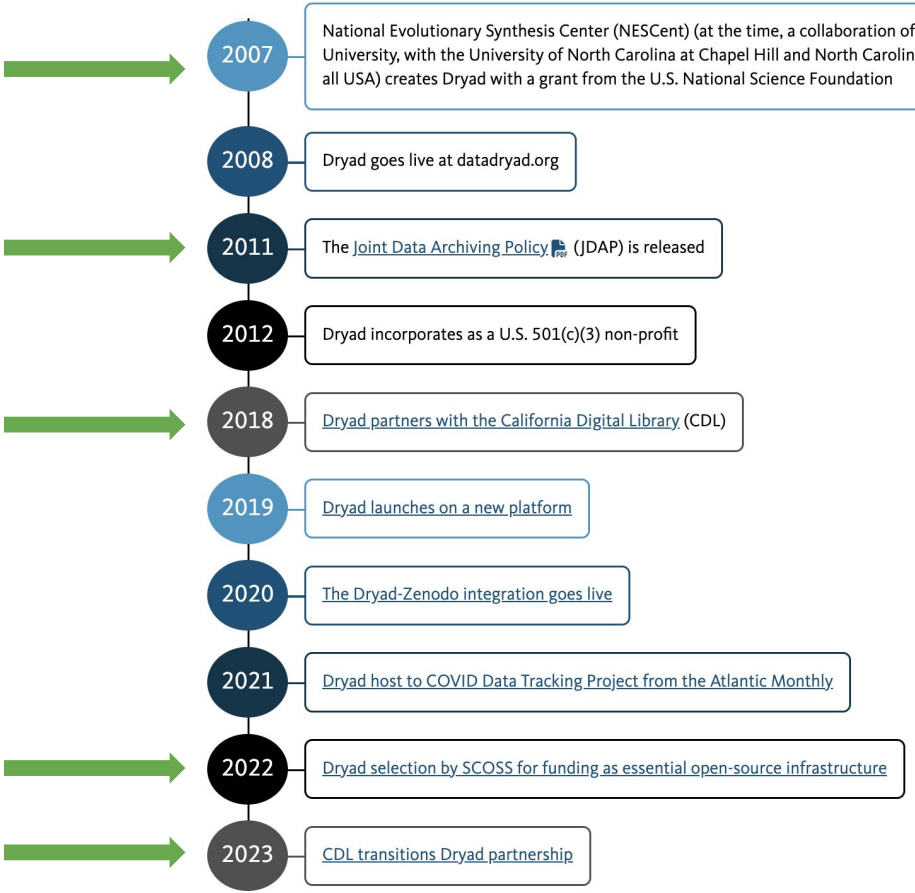
https://datadryad.org

Sustaining Dryad requires careful reconfigurations of relationships.

These relationships shape and are shaped by funding streams.

A historical perspective

Reconfiguring relationships



Business models

Project funding

↓

Sustaining grants

↓

In-kind resources

↓

Membership model

↓

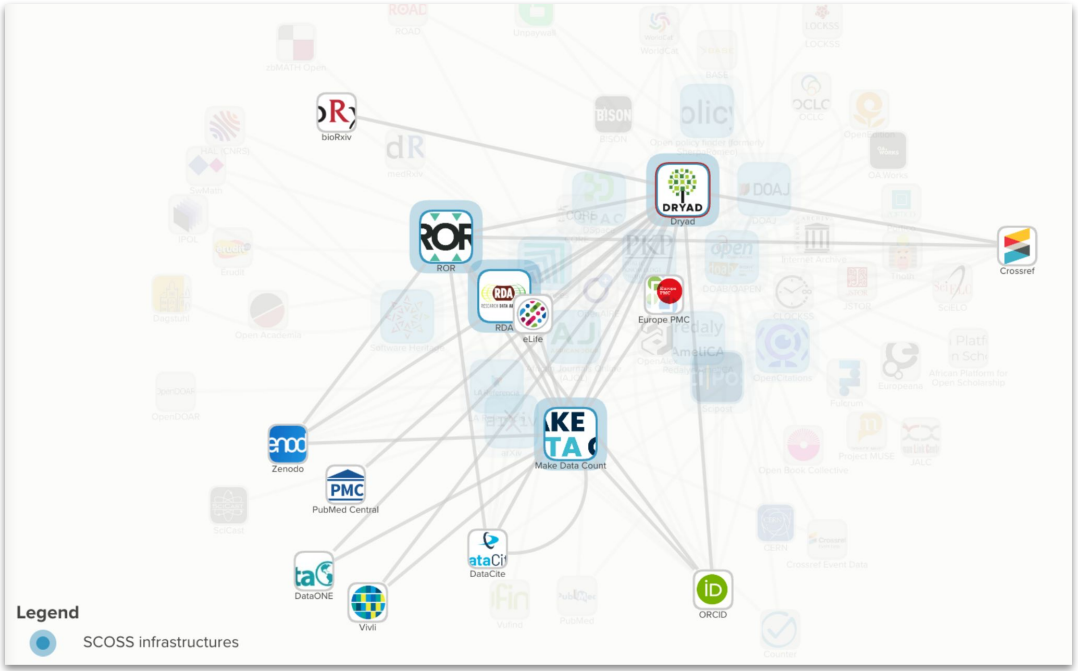
New fee structure

Types of reconfigurations of relationships

Reinforcing relationships with publishers

Forging relationships with institutions

Positioning relationships with infrastructures



https://scoss.org/

Competition, collaboration, or coopetition?

The case for coopetition

*So where is it we need to cooperate? **What are sort of the base level standards that we all need to meet** and all need to sort of work together to define and describe and to ensure that we're all there. **And then where are the places where we can compete,** where we can sort of say we're different and we're better because we have X, Y or Z. (P2)*

The case for partnership

*This is a conversation [..] about the multiplicity of open infrastructure, all **knocking on the same funder's doors to get money**. How can we all either **share resources or come up with a package** that is, "This is the support that open infrastructures can provide to you as an academic institution." And how do we **collectively create those synergies** so that people don't go and pick a proprietary software? (P6)*

Excluding/ending relationships

Who to collaborate with (and who not to?)

Conflicting ideas about business models can lead to ending relationships.

Tension: Perceived values about ‘openness’ with need to cover costs (urgently)

The challenge of ending relationships in a respectful, “amicable” way

What does this mean for progressing open research?

Thinking about relationships is also “thinking like a business” (and vice versa)

Thinking like a business is not a bad thing.

Sustainability is a systemic issue. Consider how to reconfigure (or end) relationships.

Practicing open research is more than just knowing how.

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Thank you

Questions?

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[OECD, 2017: Business models for sustainable research data repositories]

Value proposition

- **Community** interest (nonprofit ethos)
- From platform to **service provider** (we will take care of it for you)
- Service: curation + responding to data sharing policies

Unique selling points

- Curated data, curation service (visibility, reporting)
- Openness (by default)
- Values alignment
- It costs less for us to do it
- On the approved lists
- Integrations

The new business model

Points to consider:

Models which support open principles (OECD, 2017)

Mixture of funding streams (variety of partners/supporters, not just based on deposits)

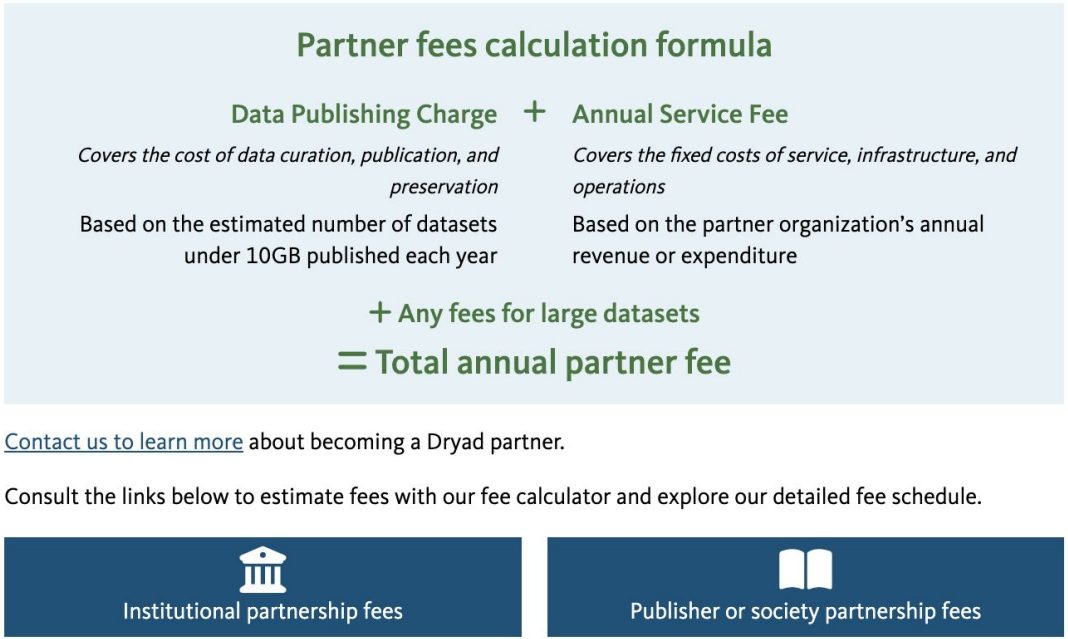
Fixed funding for fixed costs; variable funding for variable costs

Accommodate different tiers of institutions, different budgeting timescales

How to transition existing partners?

…

The new business model



https://datadryad.org/join_us

3 (or 4) types of fees

Fixed costs: Annual fee (staff & systems)

Variable costs: DPC + large data fee (curation, storage)

But have to allow for flexibility