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Tri-Agency Research Data Management Policy

by Caroline Winter | 10 April 2020 | English, Observations, Observations and Responses | 0 comments



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At a glance:

Title	<i>Tri-Agency Research Data Management Policy for Consultation</i>
Creators	Government of Canada
Publication Date	May 2018
Keywords	data management, funding agencies, open data

In May 2018, the Government of Canada released a draft *Tri-Agency Research Data Management Policy for Consultation* (RDM Policy). The draft policy is part of a Tri-Agency strategy for encouraging and supporting research data management (RDM), which also includes the *Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications* (2015) and the *Tri-Agency Statement of Principles on Digital Data Management* (2016)(For

more information, see “[Tri-Agency Statement of Principles on Digital Data Management](#)” and “[Partner Response to Tri-Agency Statement of Principles on Digital Data Management](#)” by Lisa Goddard [UVic Libraries]).

The RDM Policy applies to institutions who administer tri-agency funding as well as grant recipients. It includes three key points:

1. Institutions must have publicly available RDM strategies that are reviewed and updated regularly. They must ensure that their researchers have RDM strategies in place as well.
2. Grant proposals should include data management plans (DMPs), and some funding opportunities will require them.
3. Grant recipients must deposit all research data relevant to funded publications into repositories, and data should be open access where legally and ethically appropriate. They should also clearly link publications to the research data.

The final version of the policy had not been released at the time of writing, but Portage [reports](#) a release date of Spring 2020.

In December 2019, the Government released a [Public Consultation Summary](#). This summary shows that overall, Canadian researchers support the policy but call for clarification of terminology and scope, and they raise concerns about ethics and implementation and monitoring costs.

The RDM Policy and the INKE Partnership

Many Canadian institutions have RDM supports available to researchers through institutional libraries. These include INKE Partnership members [University of Victoria Libraries](#) and [Simon Fraser University Libraries](#). In Australia, [Edith Cowan University Library](#) lists institutional policies as well as support services.

In response to a growing awareness of the importance of RDM, the [Portage Network](#)—an initiative of [CARL / ABRC \(Canadian Association of Research Libraries / Association des bibliothèques de recherche du Canada\)](#)—launched the [DMP Assistant](#) in October 2015. The DMP Assistant is an open, bilingual, online tool for creating digital management plans (DMPs). In March 2018, Portage launched the [Institutional Strategy Template and Guidance Document](#) in anticipation of the RDM policy release. Both tools are recommended in the draft RDM policy.

In January 2020, the [Portage Research Intelligence Expert Group \(RIEG\)](#) released a [report](#) summarizing the results of a survey of Canadian research institutions conducted in June 2019 in anticipation of the release of an official version of the RDM policy. The survey gathered data about the status of institutions’ RDM strategies and the challenges faced in developing them. The report states that, as of June 2019, 80% of respondents reported that their research institution had begun the process of developing an institutional RDM strategy (2019 p. 3). Some of the Portage RIEG recommendations include the creation of an inventory for of institutional policies, a community of practice, and a set of best practices.

In January 2019, Jacqueline M. Quinless and Shahira A. Khair at the University of Victoria Libraries published the results of a survey about RDM practices distributed to UVic researchers. The report, [The Enduring Potential of Data: An Assessment of Researcher Data Stewardship Practices at the University of Victoria](#), notes that demand for training and guidance about RDM is clear, but variations in terminology and practices among disciplines pose a challenge, particularly in relation to data sharing.

Response to the RDM Policy in the Wider Academic Community

Because the final RDM Policy has not yet been released, no Canadian academic institutions have an RDM strategy in place at the time of writing. Several institutions, however, have endorsed Research Data Canada’s [RDM Statement of Principles \(2016\)](#).

In August 2019, SSHRC announced the [Research Data Management Capacity Building Initiative](#), which will fund 40 projects supporting RDM capacity in Canada through the [Connection Grants](#) program between November 2019 and August 2020.

RDM is an important concern in the international academic community as well as in Canada. In the UK, for instance, the [Digital Curation Centre \(DCC\)](#) includes [overviews of institutional and research funder RDM policies](#), as well as resources for developing data management plans. Its [DMPOnline](#) tool includes templates for numerous funders in the UK and across the world.

In Australia, the [Analysis and Policy Observatory \(APO\)](#) collects [resources related to RDM](#), and RDM is supported by a variety of organizations and initiatives. As of 2020, the [Australian Research Council \(ARC\)](#) [requires RDM plans](#) as part of its national funding program. [the Australian National Data Service \(ANDS\)](#) supports research data projects and manages [Research Data Australia](#), a discovery portal for Australian research. The [Australian Research Data Commons \(ARDC\)](#), founded in 2018, develops research data infrastructure and a national research data commons.

RDM and Open Scholarship

The RDM Policy is positioned in relation to international policy related to open access and open data, including the Open Government Partnership's [Open Government Declaration \(2011\)](#) and the [G7 Science Ministers Communiqué \(2017\)](#).

Openness is a guiding value of the RDM Policy, which states that: "The agencies believe that research data collected with the use of public funds should be responsibly and effectively managed and belong, to the fullest extent possible, in the public domain and available for reuse by others" (2018).

Works Cited

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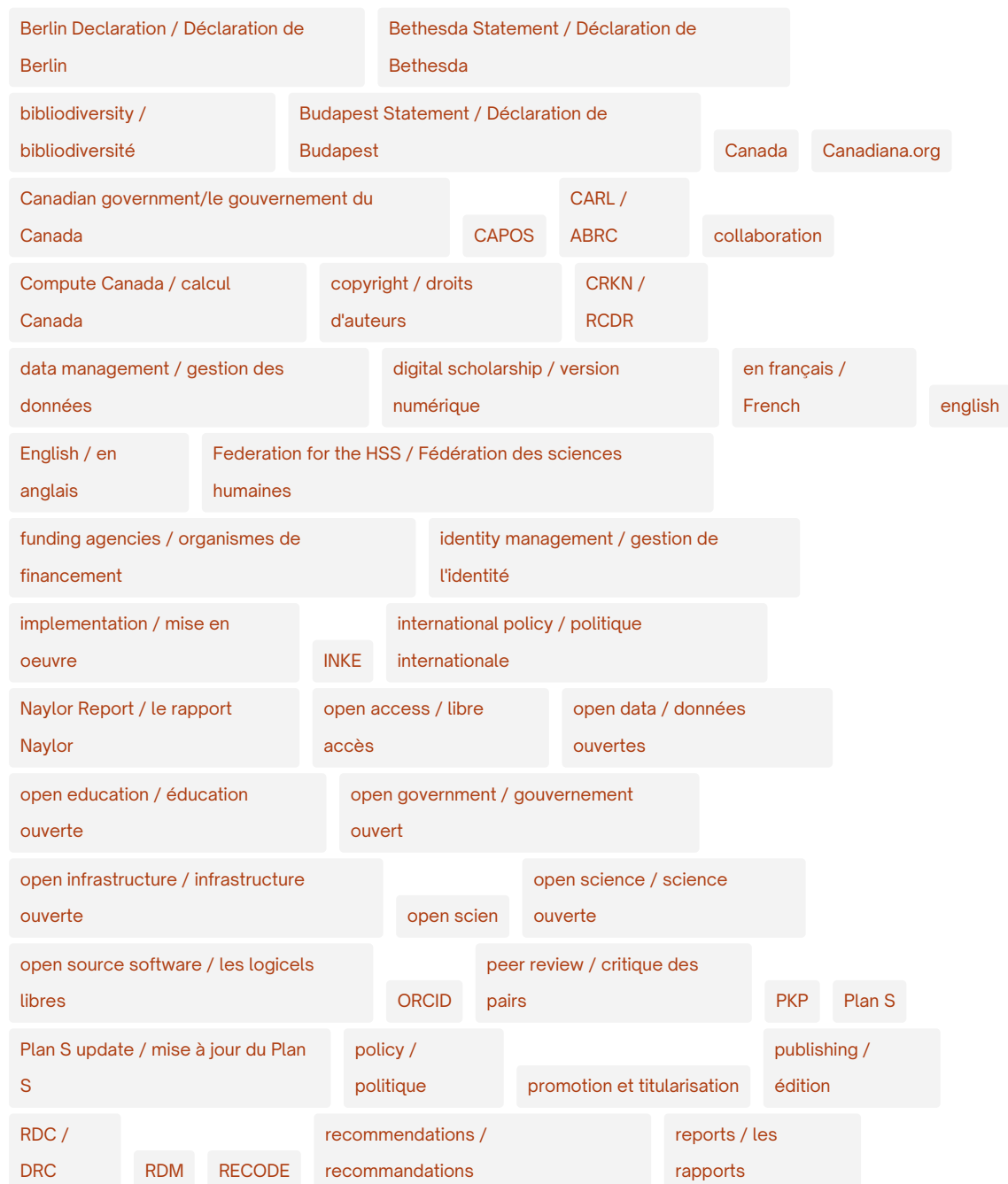
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