

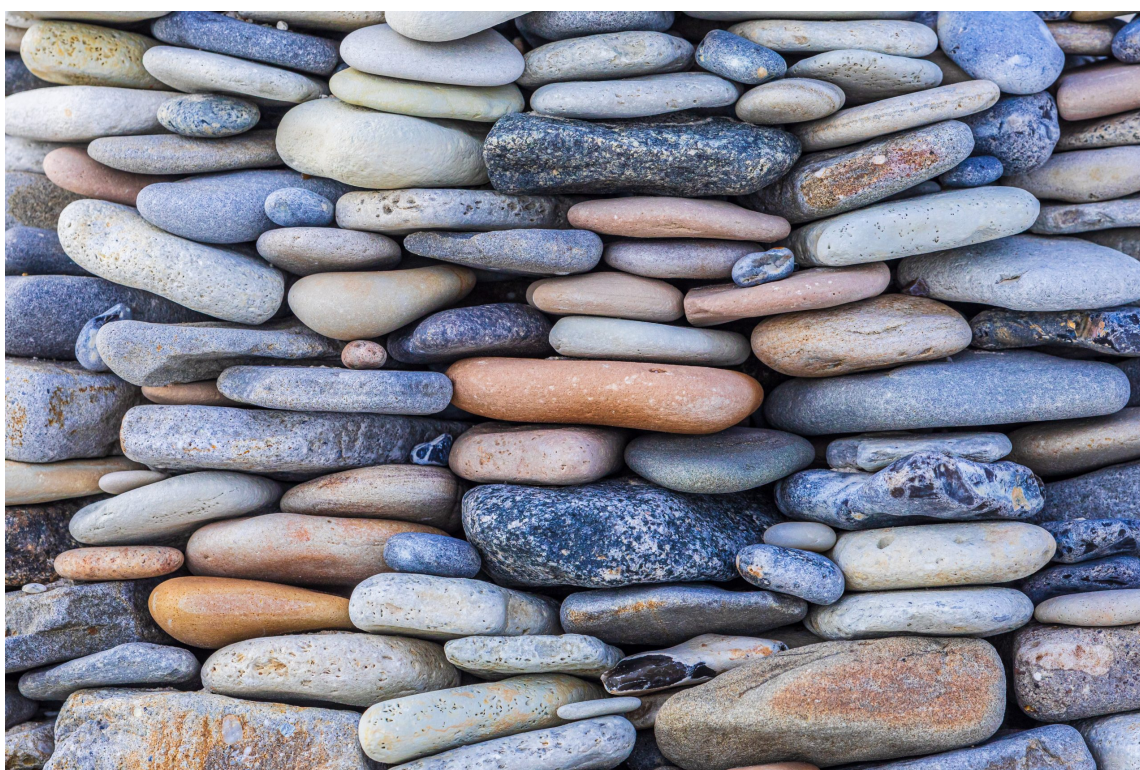
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The TRUST Principles for Digital Repositories

by Caroline Winter | 18 December 2020 | English, Observations, Observations and Responses | 0 comments



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This observation was written by Caroline Winter.

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At a glance:

Title	The TRUST Principles for Digital Repositories
Creator	Research Data Alliance (RDA), Lin et. al.
Publication Date	May 2020
Keywords	Data management , open data , repositories

The TRUST Principles for Digital Repositories articulate five dimensions of repository design, governance,

and maintenance across which the repository can establish trustworthiness: Transparency, Responsibility, User Focus, Sustainability, and Technology.

Discussion of the TRUST Principles originated at the Research Data Alliance (RDA) gathering in April 2019, and, after a year-long community consultation, including the released of [white papers 1.0](#) (April 2019) and [2.0](#) (September 2019), the Principles were published in an article in *Scientific Data* by Dawai Lin et al. titled “[The TRUST Principles for Digital Repositories](#)” (RDA 2020).

Lin et al. note that standards and certifications are one way to inspire trust, such as the [CoreTrustSeal](#) for repositories, developed and maintained by an international, community-based, nonprofit organization. But these standards are not always familiar to the broader repository user community, which includes librarians, researchers, policymakers, and other stakeholders (Lin et al. 2020). The TRUST Principles are thus intended as a starting point for discussing best practices and implementation strategies for repositories across stakeholder groups (Lin et al. 2020).

The five principles are as follows:

Transparency: Providing clear information and evidence about the repository’s holdings and services and holdings, including its terms of use and preservation timelines, builds users’ trust and confidence in the data they retrieve and deposit.

Responsibility: Repositories can build user trust by responsibly adhering to metadata and data curation, standards, managing intellectual property rights, and ensuring the authenticity, integrity, reliability, and persistence of the data in the repository.

User focus: Trustworthy repositories attend to and commit to meeting the needs of their respective user communities, including by enforcing metadata and other standards, enabling discoverability and reuse, and providing metrics about data usage.

Sustainability: In order to be able to provide dependable services for users, repositories must have sustainable funding, have plans in place for disaster management and other disruptions, and have governance structures to ensure the preservation of data in the long term.

Technology: Ensuring the security and reliability of a repository’s technical infrastructure and attending to security threats are essential for making a repository trustworthy (Lin et al. 2020).

The TRUST Principles and the INKE Partnership

In July 2020, the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL–ABRC) and Portage released a [statement](#) endorsing the TRUST Principles. The statement notes that trustworthiness is particularly important as repositories become increasingly significant and impactful elements of the research ecosystem.

The statement also notes that the research library community has an important role to play in the provision and management of research repositories, including Portage and Compute Canada’s [Federated Research Data Repository \(FRDR\)](#). CARL and Portage also highlight activities such as the [Open Repositories Working Group \(ORWG\)](#) (see “Advancing Open,” an initiative of the ORWG) and the [Digital Preservation Working Group \(DPWG\)](#) (CARL 2020).

In November 2020, Research Data Canada, the Portage Network, and the RDA presented a webinar on [TRUST Principles in the Canadian Context](#), discussing the Principles’ key ideas and considerations related to their implementation in Canada. A [video recording of the webinar](#) is available through CANARIE’s YouTube channel.

Reactions to the TRUST Principles from the Broader Community

As of May 2020, the TRUST Principles had been endorsed by 33 organizations based in Argentina, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, the UK, and the US. In Canada, it has been endorsed by Research Data Canada (RDC) as well as CARL and Portage, as noted above (RDA 2020).

The [nestor statement of endorsement](#) recommends, however, that the TRUST Principles be revised to emphasize specific digital preservation strategies and to link more explicitly with existing standard and metrics of trustworthiness (2020).

The TRUST Principles and Open Scholarship

Repositories play an increasingly central role in the open scholarship ecosystem. As the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted, preprints in medical research are critical for rapid response to global issues (see “[Open Scholarship and COVID-19](#)”). This has led to growing momentum behind the Open Access movement worldwide (see “[Plan S Update: Rights Retention Strategy](#)”).

The complexity of this ecosystem highlights the need for repositories to be transparent and trustworthy. This concern has been raised in discussions around the role of commercial platforms, such as [Academia](#) and [ResearchGate](#), and non-commercial platforms, such as [Humanities Commons](#) and the nascent Canadian Humanities and Social Sciences Commons (see “[Social Media and Open Social Scholarship](#)”).

Data management has become increasingly central in research, library, and funding contexts too, particularly in the realm of open science and open scholarship more broadly (Lin et al. 2020; see “[Tri-Agency Research Data Management Policy](#)” and “[The Sorbonne Declaration on Research Data Rights](#)”).

Some consensus is emerging about best practices for data management, such as [the FAIR principles](#). The TRUST Principles complement these by promoting data sharing and reuse, a crucial component of open science and open scholarship because it enables studies to be replicated and verified. Sharing and reusing data requires trust: researchers reusing data need to know the data’s provenance and be able to evaluate its quality (Lin et al. 2020; Dillo 2020).

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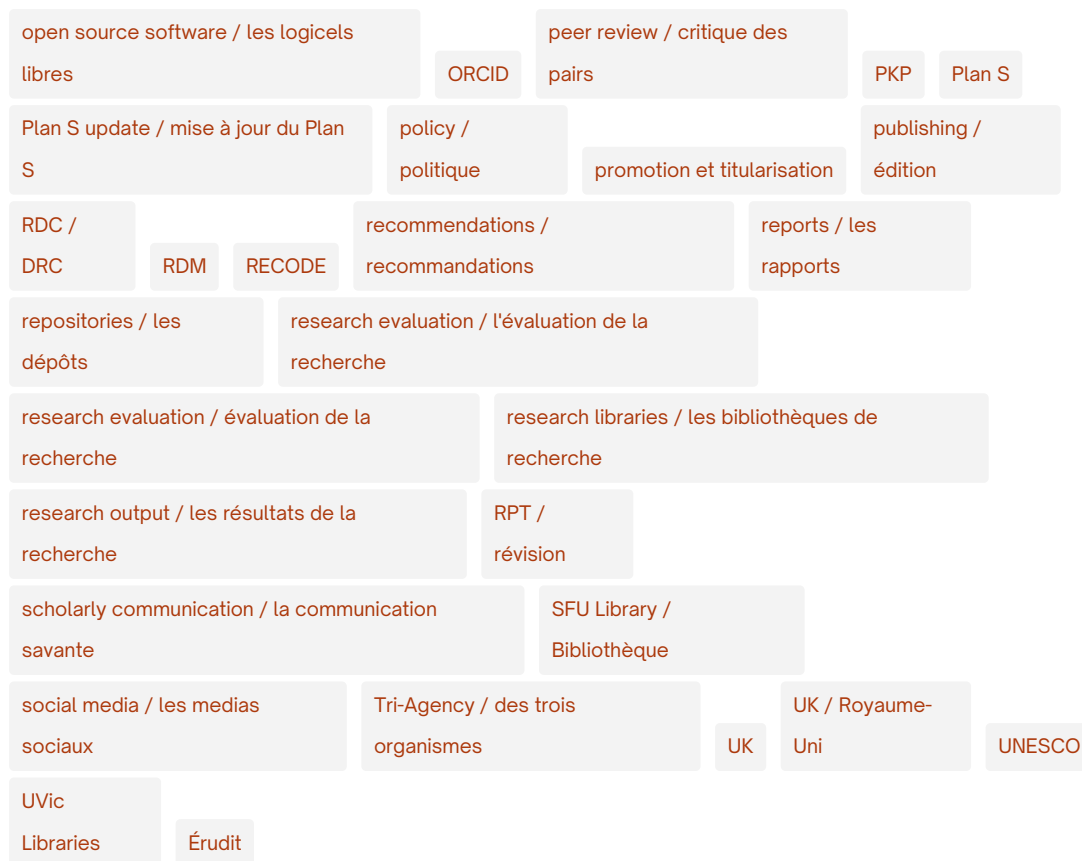
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