

Taking the temperature

Exploring the lifecycle of research data using the 'hot', 'warm' or 'cold' metaphor

HOT

Active Research Data

- Working, live or active data that is used, amended, updated, or transformed in the day-to-day heat of a research project.
- Regularly used research data
- Changing data – frequently updated and modified
- Multiple users – maybe internal and external collaborators
- Not all data will need to be kept



The problem

Digital humanities data have been created for decades but maintaining web platforms and databases is difficult after a funded period. Researchers struggle to keep their data accessible in a useful way (at record level) despite having vibrant communities of users. Valuable data are at risk because they are not FAIR, or even online.

The solution

At the University of Oxford we piloted a platform to bring together different types and structures of digital humanities data onto one system. This became the Sustainable Digital Scholarship (SDS) service which runs on the SaaS platform Figshare. We have 515 users, 32 projects, 5m+ views and 800k+ downloads since our launch in 2021. We are a 'warm' data repository which in particular meets the needs of digital humanities projects.

The metaphor

Contextualising where the SDS service is positioned within the wider complex Research Data Management (RDM) landscape at Oxford has been important to fully explain the purpose of the service. We have used the hot-warm-cold metaphor to researchers to help them understand the best solution for their research data storage.

Our conclusions

Using temperature as a metaphor tied to the stages of the RDM lifecycle has proved highly successful in articulating to researchers what they need to consider when looking after their research data during their project. It has also helped other RDM professionals understand and describe their place within Oxford's research data ecosystem.

WARM

Semi-Active Research Data

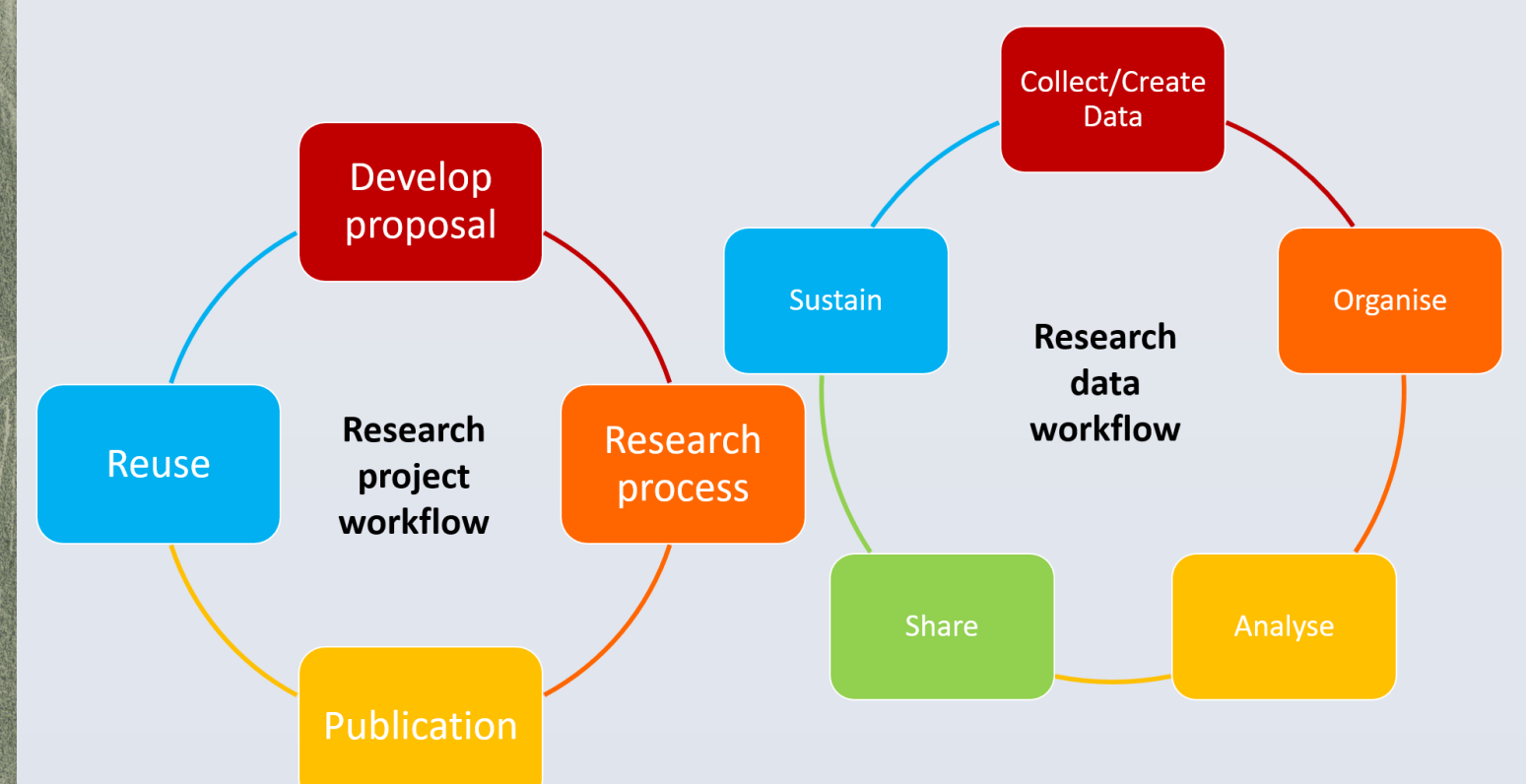
- The semi-active state of data is where records are in a fairly stable place, shared and published online and only tend to be updated infrequently or in light of new research.
- Research data is still in use (often for disciplinary communities)
- Needs to be accessible at record (not file) level
- Changing data – occasionally updated and modified
- Multiple users – maybe internal and external collaborators
- Not all data will need to be kept



COLD

Archival Research Data

- Data in its archival state, usually deposited in an institutional repository for preservation, and with little expectation that data will be changed or updated.
- Archived research data (rarely accessed)
- Stable data – not or rarely updated or modified
- Accessible at file (not record) level
- Collaboration capacity not required
- Data is required to be kept (by funder, or research need)



About the authors:

Dr **Megan Gooch** (ORCID - 0000-0002-3190-0509) is the Head of the Centre for Digital Scholarship and Digital Humanities Research Support at the University of Oxford. She plays a pivotal role in leading the development and realisation of the long-term vision and strategy for digital scholarship at the University.



Damon Strange (ORCID - 0000-0002-5851-718X) currently works as a Project Manager at the University of Oxford. A freelance Programme and Project Management consultant, with a particular specialism in Research Data Management. For further info visit: www.exnihiloconsulting.co.uk

