

Vignettes

Anonymised case studies of four projects which serve as examples of the four most common categories of response.

Project A - Active Data Management Plan

This project trains volunteers to monitor bodies of water, comparing gathered data to known standards to ensure data quality. Data management processes have changed and evolved within the project, particularly in response to changes in technology. This project maintains a web-based portal through which volunteers can submit and access data, with visualisations representing the data and the data collection process. Participants must complete mandatory training upon onboarding, including an explanation of project policies. In addition to their own data management, the project administrators offer guidance and materials to support other, similar projects in administering and managing data collection, in part due to their own experiences of the associated challenges. However, the main project website does not feature a clearly sign-posted privacy policy, nor the materials provided by the project administrators around data management policies.

Project B - Data Management Plan in Development

This project uses sensor kits and educational resources for monitoring water. It focused on the development of sensors and other resources, and data collection has been limited. As data collection is picking up pace, administrators are now turning their efforts to producing data management and sharing plans. At the time of responding to our requests, these resources had not been finalised. In the meantime, all data are uploaded publicly to the project website to support use in educational settings. The project website features a privacy policy, but to access the policy, visitors must use the website search function. Moreover, this policy applies predominantly to the analytics capabilities of the project website, rather than the data gathered from participants, and several fields are incomplete.

Project C - No Resources to Create a Data Management Plan

This project is part of a larger umbrella project, which manages and supports a number of smaller initiatives with different focuses and aims. Initiatives are subject to different levels of funding and resources, while employing differing technologies and data collection processes. Given the limited resources available for the umbrella project and the concern for ensuring the continuity of the initiatives and data, administrators viewed data management as a secondary concern, and one which there was not sufficient time or resources to address. Neither project website features a privacy policy or guidelines for data management, in spite of collecting potentially sensitive data including addresses and contact details. However, data

collection forms do feature an option to hide data from the main project website, allowing participants some degree of control over the sharing of their data.

Project D - No Perceived Need for a Data Management Plan

This project allowed volunteers to capture data through a smartphone or mobile device, which was then uploaded to the project server to be stored indefinitely. As an alternative to a DMP, the administrators adopted a simple model. Data capture was managed by the device, with no subsequent methodology for data management or moderation, while the decision of which data to share and when was controlled by volunteers, although managed by the project server. In this way, project administrators felt that the project had no need for an explicit DMP. The project dedicates a portion of its FAQ to issues of privacy, including relevant questions on data ownership and GDPR compliance. In addition, the project website features a privacy policy which explains data processing and privacy issues in plain language.