Research Data Management

Survey Results

Objective
At the end of 2017, the EPFL Library launched a survey aimed at evaluating the feasibility of data curation/ data stewardship services among EPFL researchers. The long-term goal is to conduct the survey annually in order to obtain a regular overview about the researchers’ evolving needs.

Results
More information about this survey as well as the exact survey questions are available on the project page on the Open Science Framework: https://osf.io/mz3fx/

International collaboration
This survey is the result of collaborative work between several institutions, namely EPFL, TU Delft (in the Netherlands), the University of Cambridge (in the UK), and the University of Illinois (in the US) who co-designed it. The survey comprised questions common to all institutions as well as institution-specific ones. The first survey was run by TU Delft and EPFL only at the end of 2017. In total, 659 responses where collected (423 from TU Delft and 236 from EPFL)

Key highlights
- Around 6530 EPFL scientists have been contacted to take part in the survey.
- 237 responses were received between 11.07.2017 and 12.01.2017 over the course of three weeks.
- Survey response rate: 3.6%
- Who took part in the survey: Mostly postdocs and researchers, from all schools as the following graphic shows in more detail:

![Pie chart showing which EPFL faculty are members of](chart.png)
Data management habits: automatic data back-up is ensured for 52% of the respondents through EPFL or external cloud solutions. Although most respondents (86%) never encountered data loss in their research practice, most of those who experienced data loss needed between 7 days and a month to find or reproduce the lost data. About half of the participants never experienced difficulties in finding their data. Most respondents (61%) do not currently use dedicated tools for research data management. 71% of them would be interested in solutions to help them in the management of their data.

Knowledge in terms of research data management: Most respondents (65%) do not have a data management plan for their project and 60% have never heard of Fair data principles. Half of the respondents, although they know data repositories, have never used them. In terms of data sharing, 57% of the participants declare sharing their data more or less frequently through Zenodo, Git or C4Science. The most frequently cited reasons for not sharing one’s data are:

- “It is not required by the journal or the funding agency (...) Data is sensitive, I do not find it useful (...) I plan to publish subsequent studies on the same dataset (...) I do not know where and how to share the data, Datasets are large (...)

Noteworthy fact: Half of the participants do not know to whom their data belongs.
Specific support and training needs:

**Conclusion**

Although some respondents are aware of the importance of good data management, a lot of them still need information and training in this area. In the wider context of Open science and funders’ requirements, DMP writing, FAIR compliant research practices, knowledge of Data repositories, data security and safety are for instance topics on which more information is needed. Half of the respondents request training on data management, on storage, backup... and tools.

The results as well as the data are available publicly on Zenodo.

For any questions, please contact: researchdata@epfl.ch


Online: [https://zenodo.org/record/1168800#Wp1rA-fjleQ](https://zenodo.org/record/1168800#Wp1rA-fjleQ)