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"We need an up-to-date infrastructure for our data," say researchers

DataCite workshop: 'Opportunities and new solutions in research data management'

Cologne, 19 December 2012 – Eighty-two staff members of research institutions and libraries gathered at the GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences in Cologne on 12 December 2012 to discuss research data as part of the DataCite workshop 'Opportunities and new solutions in research data management'. The workshop was organised by the German members of the international not-for-profit organisation DataCite, namely the German National Library of Medicine (ZB MED), GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, the German National Library of Economics – Leibniz Information Centre for Economics (ZBW) and the German National Library of Science and Technology (TIB).

"DataCite's goal is to make research data publicly available and citable," said Jan Brase, Managing Agent of DataCite, speaking at the workshop's opening session. As well as making research results accessible in the form of scientific publications, he argued that it is equally important to publish the research data on which these publications are based – something that can only be achieved if the research data is made permanently available in a citable format on the Internet. A URL is not suitable for this purpose because it may change over time. The solution is a Digital Object Identifier (DOI), a unique and persistent digital identifier for digital resources which is comparable to the ISBN number used for print publications. In Germany, DOIs are assigned by the four German DataCite members: ZB MED, GESIS, ZBW and TIB. This service is free for academic institutions.

In the second workshop session the participants discussed the current status of research in the field of research data archiving. Professor Dr. Björn Brembs from the University of Regensburg reported that researchers still lack the kind of cohesive infrastructure that would allow them to reliably store their data and make it freely accessible. The neurobiologist argued that he is unable to devote himself exclusively to his research work because he also has to spend time focusing on the management of his research data and determining how this data can be made freely available to everyone and archived in a persistent format. "The Internet was developed by scientists, yet the scientific community has so far only exploited a fraction of the opportunities it offers," Brembs said. He called on information infrastructure providers to develop structures which would enable researchers to spend all their time on their research.

In the following session, the participants were presented with examples of best practice from institutions which already take advantage of DOIs and the associated DataCite services to archive research data and make it publicly accessible, including

the Socio-Economic Panel Study at the German Institute for Economic Research, the GESIS data archive and the German joint research project at the Global Biodiversity Information Facility to develop a data network for biodiversity research.

In the afternoon, the participants could choose from parallel sessions designed to familiarise them with different aspects of research data archiving. Topics included the technical aspects of DOI registration, practical details on how DOI registration with DataCite actually works, and a look ahead at the value-added services that DataCite is developing.

At the end of the workshop, Ulrich Korwitz, the Director of the ZB MED, summed up the day's results: "What we've learned today is that there are still many unresolved issues in the field of research data management – and that global solutions need to be found to permanently archive research data. That's why it is so important that we – the DataCite members – keep exchanging ideas and working together to find the best solution for managing research data and making it accessible." Korwitz also noted that the situation seems to be taking a turn for the better: "I think that, in the future, many institutions and universities will be facing up to the challenges posed by research data management," he said.

All the workshop presentations are available on the Internet at:
http://www.gesis.org/veranstaltungen/konferenzen/datacite-workshop/

About DataCite:
DataCite e.V. is an international not-for-profit organisation that offers services and know-how relating to the management, referencing and citation of research data. The December 2012 workshop was organised by the German members of DataCite, namely the German National Library of Medicine (ZB MED), GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, the German National Library of Science and Technology (TIB) and the German National Library of Economics – Leibniz Information Centre for Economics (ZBW).
www.datacite.org

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