Questions to Help Build a Robust Data Management Plan

Form and Type of Data

- What is your data?
- How is your data collected or produced? Where does your data come from?
- If you are using existing data, how will you obtain it?
- What form does your data take? (e.g. notebooks, audiotapes, questionnaires, specimens, spreadsheets, text-documents, etc)
- Is your data stored electronically? (i.e. type of file, instrument and/or software specific)
- What software, equipment, or resources do you need to create your data? Store your data? Preserve your data?
- How big are your electronic data files? What is their volume/size?
- What phase of the research life cycle is your data in?
- How will your data be processed?
- Will your data change from one phase of the current research to the next?
- Will you need your data for subsequent research?
- Are there relationships between the data you are collecting/generating and existing data? If so, what?
- What quality assurance/control measures are employed to ensure the integrity of the data?
- What is the expected lifespan of your data?

Inventory, Storage, Backup, and Security

- How are you storing your data? What software, equipment, or resources are needed?
- How are you organizing the data?
- Who will have access to your data?
- Can you easily recreate your data?
- What would happen if you lost your data?
- What backup plan do you have for your data?
- Where will the data be backed up?
- Who will back up the data?
- If your computer bag containing both your computer and back-up USB thumb-drive were stolen or lost, how would this impact your data?
- Does your data have HIPAA, FERPA, or IRB requirements which impact storage?
- Are there additional security requirements while it is stored?
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Data Standards and Documentation

- Do you have a codebook or other data documentation?
- If a researcher were replaced on your project, could the new researcher easily understand the data processes?
- What is the metadata associated with your data?
- Are there standards in your discipline or field for describing the data? Data elements?
  - Will you follow these standards and why?
- What form will the metadata take describing/documenting your data?
  - How will you capture or create these details?

Access & Sharing

- Will your data be shared?
- How will you make your data available?
- When will you make your data available?
- What equipment, software, or resources are needed to access/read/process your data?
- What is the process to gain access to your data?
- Are there any embargo periods on your data? How will they be resolved?
- Are there ethical or privacy issues associated with your data? How will they be handled?
- Are there human subjects involved with your data? What provisions are in place to maintain rights and confidentiality of human subjects?
- Does your data have HIPAA, FERPA, or IRB requirements for sharing or re-use?
- Are permission restrictions required for the data?
- Who is likely to be interested in the data?
- What and who are the intended or foreseeable uses or users of the data?
- Who holds intellectual property rights to the data, and how might this impact data access?
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Archiving and Preservation

- Will your data be preserved?
- What is the long-term plan for maintaining, curating and preserving the data?
- What archives or repositories have been identified to deposit and preserve the data?
- Does the intended long-term storage facility have preservation and back-up policies in place?
- What data/level of data will be preserved in the storage facility?
- How does your data need to be transformed for preservation?
- What metadata and/or documentation needs to be submitted with your data in order to make your data reusable or understandable?
- What related information will be deposited with your data?

Organization, Funder, and other Regulatory Requirements

- What are the University’s requirements?
- What are the funder requirements?
- Are there other regulatory requirements (OMB, Public Law, etc)?
- If publishing papers related to the data, what are the publisher requirements?
- Are there other sharing requirements?
- What confidentiality and privacy restrictions are required?