

From KAPTUR to VADS4R: Exploring Research Data in the Visual Arts

Open Repositories Conference 2014, Helsinki

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“What is arts research data? What does it mean to you? Research, art, design, architecture, I’m going to tell you. What is arts research data? We tried to find out. We asked various researchers, and this is what we found...”

Objectives

- A recap on the KAPTUR project
- Initiation of VADS4R
- Research Data in the Visual Arts
- Importance of research data and its management, preservation and re-use
- Developed training and workshops, systems and processes
- Research and repository community

KAPTUR - Recap

- To investigate the nature of research data in the visual arts
- To consider the application of technology to support collection, discoverability, usage, and preservation of research data in the arts
- To review appropriate policies, procedures and systems
- To develop case studies and showcase good practice to a wider audience

VADS4R

- Visual Arts Data Skills 4 Researchers
- Aim to provide a research data management (RDM) training programme tailored to the needs of early careers researchers and postgraduate students in the visual arts.
- Led by the Centre for Digital Scholarship (formerly known as VADS)

RDM in the Visual Arts

What is Research Data? Providing a single, authoritative definition of research data in the visual arts is challenging. Research data could be described as: "data which arises out of, and evidences, research...examples of visual arts research data may include sketchbooks, log books, sets of images, video recordings, trials, prototypes, ceramic glaze recipes, found objects, and correspondence. Research data may also be defined as: "evidence which is used or created to generate new knowledge and interpretations. 'Evidence' may be intersubjective or subjective; physical or emotional; persistent or ephemeral; personal or public; explicit or tacit; and is consciously or unconsciously referenced by the researcher at some point during the course of their research. As part of the research process, research data may be collated in a structured way to create a dataset to substantiate a particular interpretation, analysis or argument. A dataset may or may not lead to a research output, which regardless of method of presentation, is a planned public statement of new knowledge or interpretation. **Research data can be seen as your “stuff”!**

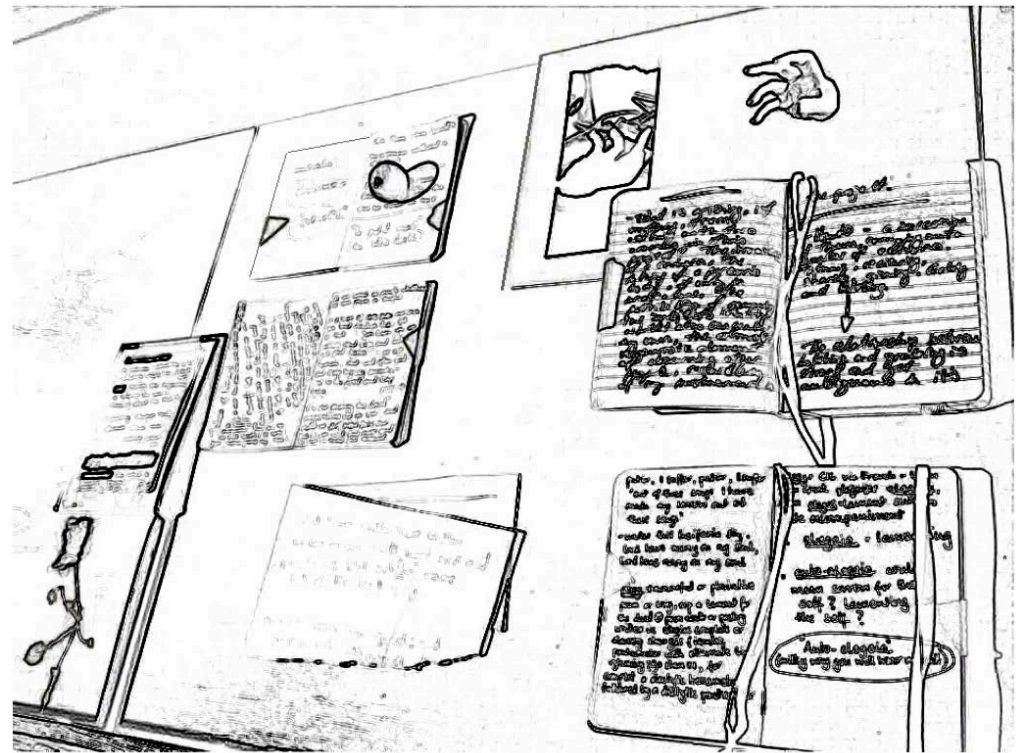
What is Research Data?

- Journals, sketchbooks, found objects, documents, diaries, data sets, notes, recordings, videos, texts, sounds...
- **STUFF!**



What are the issues?

- Handling
- Storage
- Accessibility
- Usage
- Deciding what to keep



Why Manage Your Data?

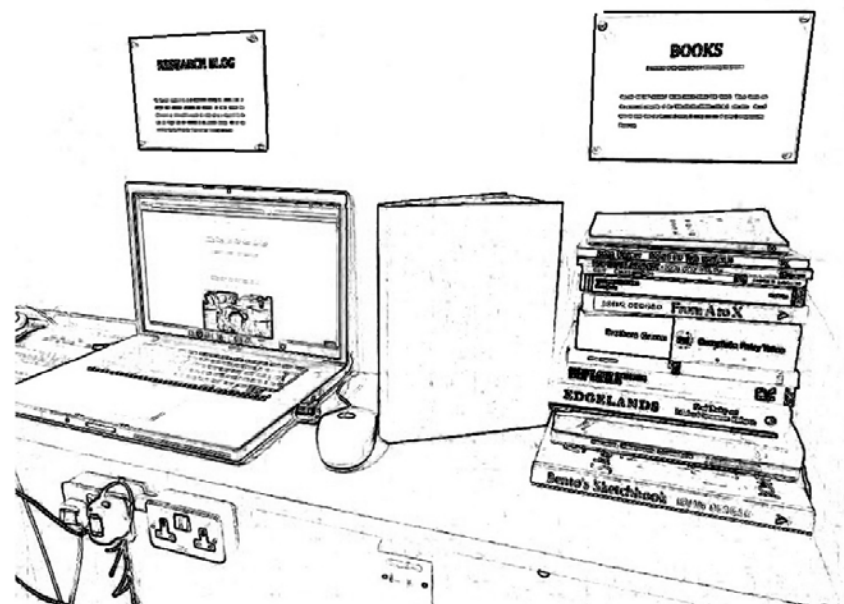
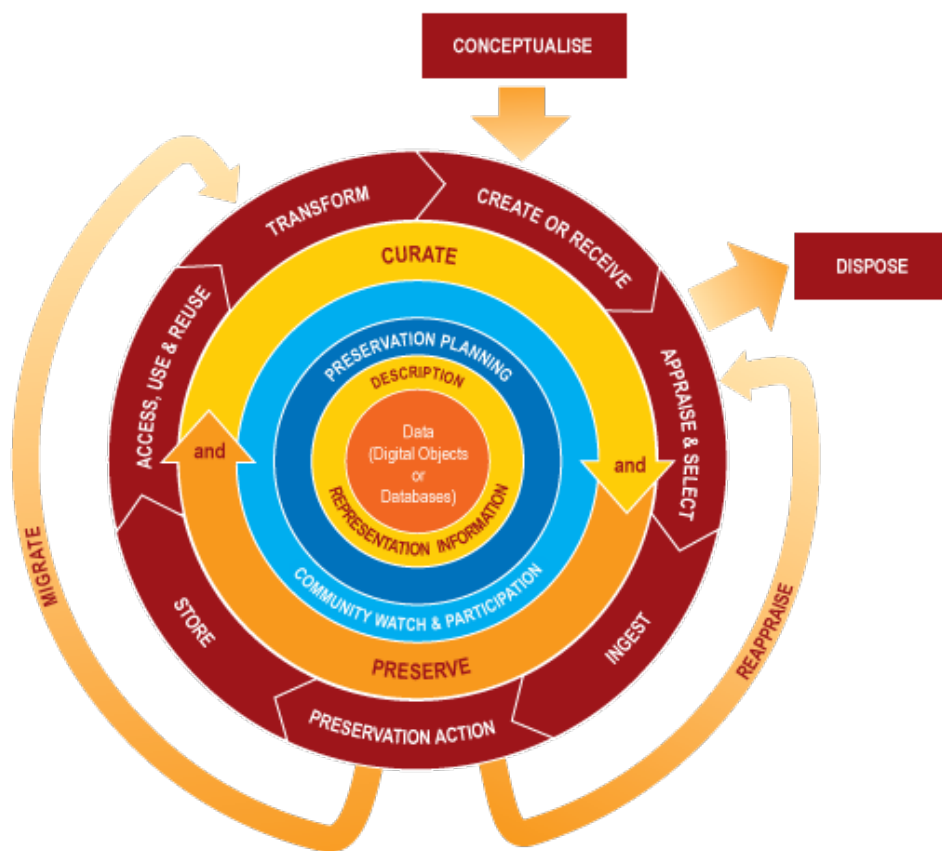
Why is Research Data Management (RDM) important?

Managing research data (or organising your 'stuff') effectively can:

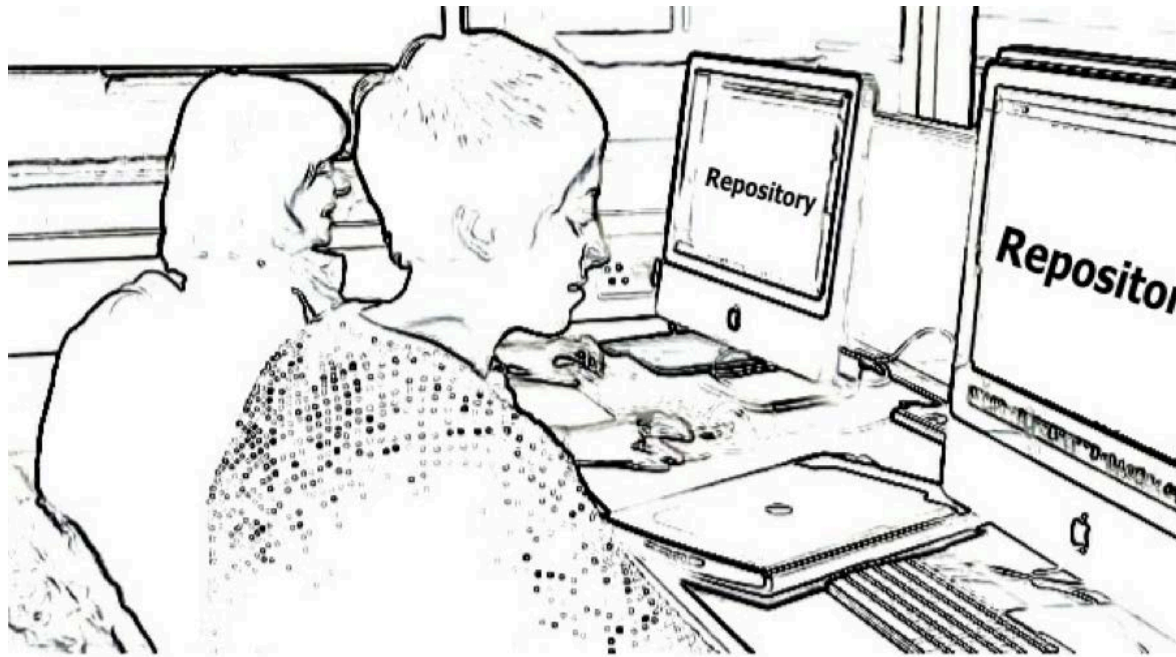
- ensure you meet research funder expectations
- make it easier to understand successive iterations of your research
- make it easier to re-visit your research if changes are required, for example by a journal editor or exhibition curator
- enable easier access to your research for re-use in other projects
- avoid the serious implications of having to re-do your research from scratch, for example due to data loss or inaccessible data



Methods for Managing Data



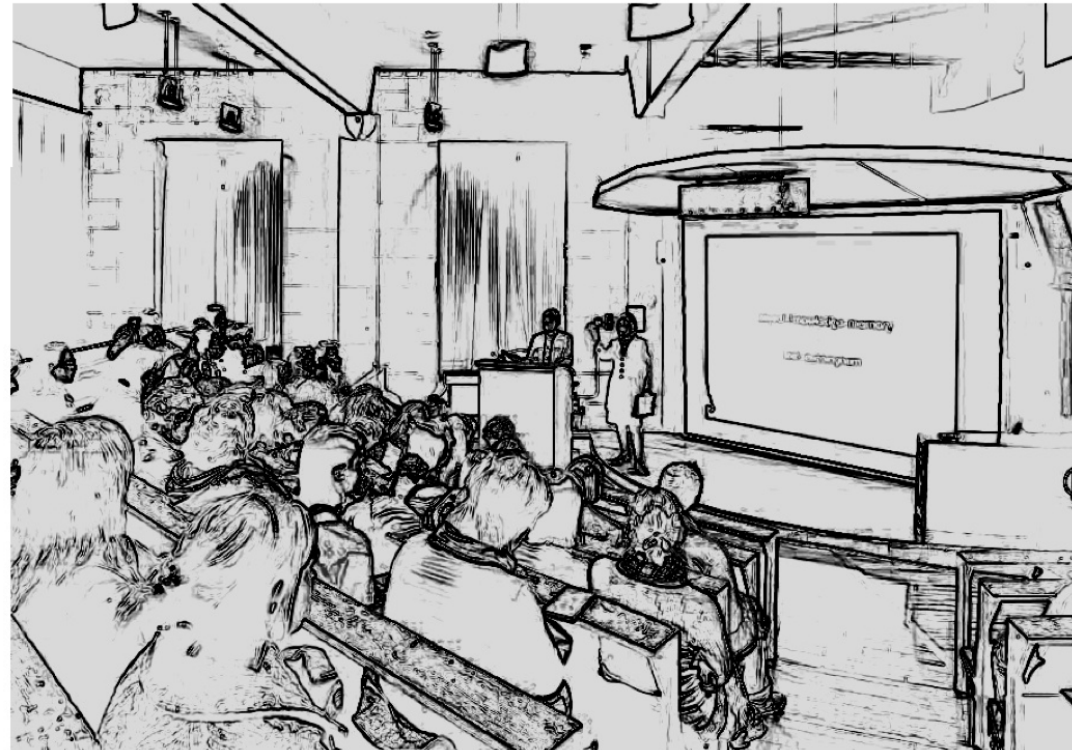
Preservation and Re-use



- Repositories, management tools, CRIS, policies, institutional support

Training and Support

- Interviews
- Teaching
- Workshops
- Toolkits
 - Introduction to research data
 - Data management and planning
 - Managing the material
 - Technical planning



<http://www.vads4r.vads.ac.uk/p/online-learning.html>

Training Materials (1)

Introduction to research data

Examples of visual arts research data (1)

What is it?

A trial or test

How is it part of the research lifecycle?

Artist practitioners may carry out hundreds of different tests and experiments in order to develop their research and evaluate the best working methods. This set of 21 small tiles is a record of some of the tests carried out, and may have been used by Denise Wren as a reference for more than one output. They also serve as a historical record for the future as part of the Crafts Study Centre's collections and archives.

Image Credit

Denise Wren, 21 small tiles used to demonstrate different saltglaze tests on stoneware, 1960s. © Rosemary Wren/Crafts Study Centre 2004. Photo: David Westwood. [Available from VADS](#)



Training Materials (2)

Data Management Planning

What is DMP?

What is data management planning?

It is essentially about defining what data and outputs you will create during your research project and how you will manage them resulting in the creation of a **Data Management Plan** or **DMP**.

Why is it important?

- A DMP is required as part of the submission process for many research grants, in particular for the Research Councils UK.
- Even if your funder doesn't require a DMP, by creating one you will be safeguarding your research for your own use and re-use for the longer term.

This training module covers six aspects of data management planning:

1. Who is responsible for DMP?
2. Organising your data
3. Improving discoverability
4. Re-use: advantages and challenges
5. Preserving your data
6. Using DMP Online



Training Materials (3)

Managing the material

Summary

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KEY POINTS:

- Before considering how to best select and appraise research data, it is necessary to define what it is.
- As much as possible it is important to include the researcher in the decision-making process.

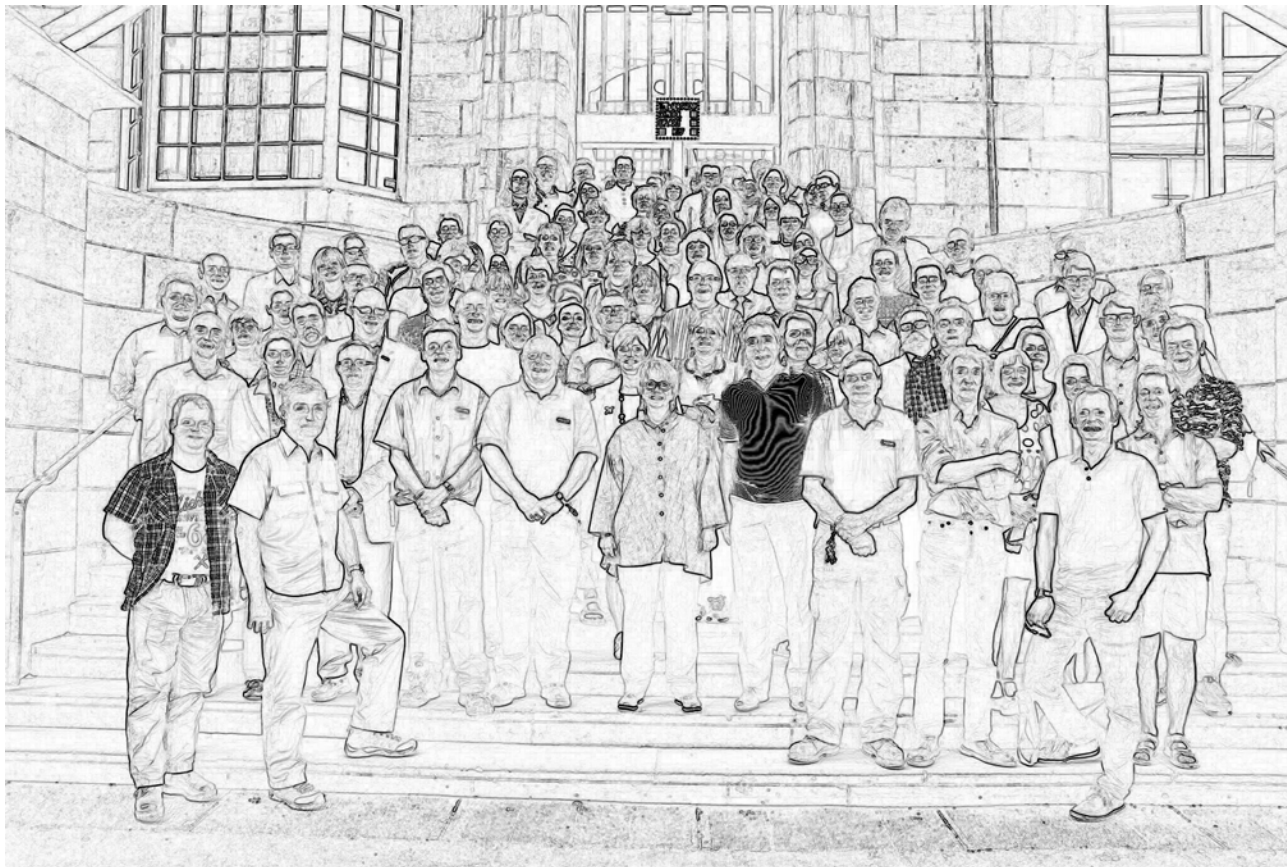
KEY QUESTIONS:

1. Does the data have a particular value or context that is unique or significant?
2. Has the research data been created according to best practice to enable its use and/or re-use?
3. Are there any ethical or legal requirements which would prevent access to the data?
4. Has the data been properly documented so it can be accessed and/or understood by others?
5. Are there any issues, such as cost of storage, which will prevent long term access?

Next Steps

- This module can be revisited if useful, and links followed to the sections suggesting further reading or examples.
- For more information about defining visual arts research data access [module 1: introduction to research data](#)
- For more information about data curation and creating a data management plan access [module 2: data management planning](#)

The Research Community



Summary Points

- Research data can be: tangible and intangible; digital and physical; heterogeneous and infinite; and complex and complicated, it does not always fit into the natural scheme of data management
- Policies and systems can aid the management of data
- Institutional and community buy-in needed
- Support is available from the VADS4R project



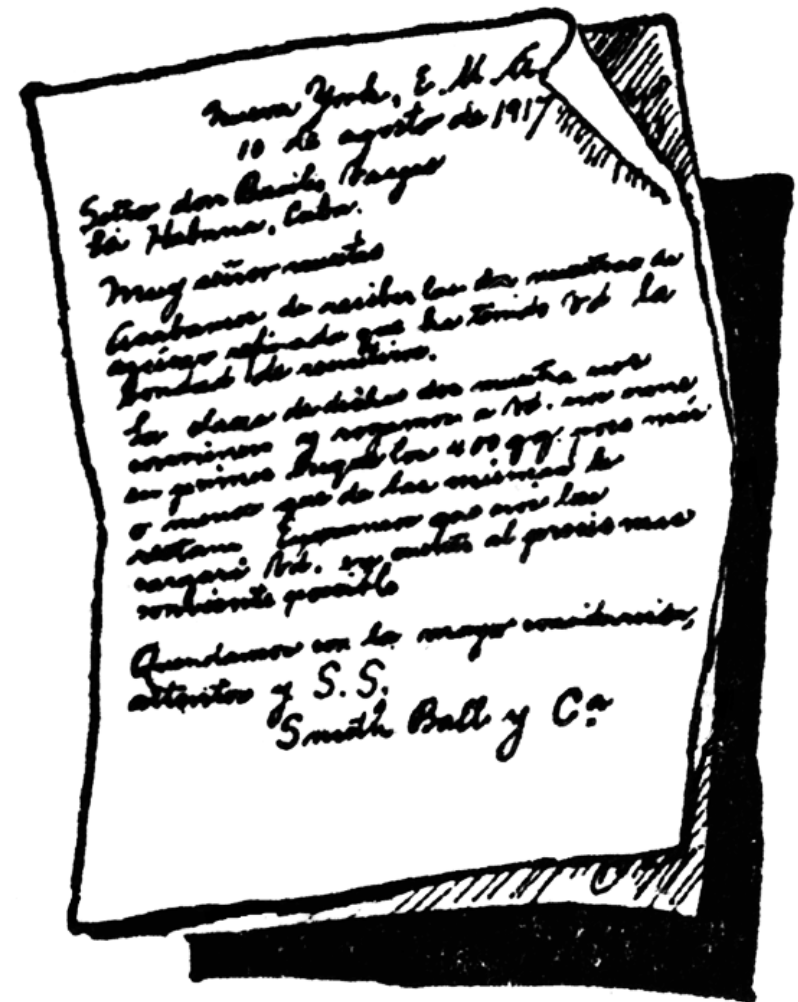
Next Steps

- Continued development of the online training
- Dissemination of training
- Additional national workshops
- Further appearance at conference events



The Future...

- Identifying further needs from researchers
- Additional Interviews
- Development of RDM systems and processes
- REF2020 requirements
- Additional funding
- RDM in the Visual Arts – a book



THANKYOU

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www.gsa.ac.uk

<http://lib.gsa.ac.uk/>

<http://www.vads.ac.uk/kaptur/>

<http://www.vads4r.vads.ac.uk/p/welcome.html>

Images courtesy of BBC website.

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