

The Geoscience Data Journal: a Locus for Stakeholder Collaboration in Data Publishing

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Due to multiple pressures – including funding resources, technical developments and policy priorities – the scholarly communication ecosystem is changing. This is inevitably causing pressures to bear not only on researchers themselves but also their fellow stakeholders: funders, publishers, data centres and libraries. Innovations in instrumentation, collection methods, software and modelling are contributing to output but we are not necessarily developing equal proficiency in managing said outputs. Accordingly, research data and datasets – their collection, curation, storage, citation and re-use – have been identified as crucial to the progression of useful knowledge, so they need to be satisfactorily integrated into the research canon.

In addition, there are issues with the actual sharing of data. For example, the provenance of the dataset (and often the dataset itself) can be “changed” as it passes from one owner to another, thereby reducing any chances of using that data to test the reproducibility of results originally made from it. Also, the present mechanism for academic recognition revolves around the production and publication of peer-reviewed papers. The production of high-quality datasets takes time and effort, and is often insufficiently recognised as an activity worthy of prestige, even though the papers that result from that dataset may be considered of significant scientific importance. Simple sharing of data is unlikely to provide the data creators with the academic recognition they deserve.

This presentation examines new title Geoscience Data Journal as a particularly relevant case study for this audience – in terms of subject matter, partnerships – and the on-going related research project PREPARDE (Peer REview for Publication & Accreditation of Research Data in the Earth sciences). The latter aims to develop the required workflows, guidelines, policies and educative support to encourage and optimize best practice in all aspects of the research data life-cycle. These aspects include deposition in an accredited repository, peer review, publication and the encouragement to re-use. Feedback from the audience on these aims would be most welcome as engagement and involvement with stakeholders are key PREPARDE objectives.