

Why faculty members at UCLA **DO** deposit their research data into long term preservation archives – behaviors in the social sciences

Prepared 08/07/2006 for the Intellectual Property Roundtable
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Summary:

There has been much discussion on why research data is *not* deposited or archived. The list of reasons includes issues of cost, time, and a perceived need to retain control over data. Here, the idea was to find out why some faculty members *do* follow through on archiving their work; results can be used to enhance existing campus level support and outreach, put in place a campus-wide framework of research data management, and develop strategies for developing data archiving behaviors among faculty who collect data in their research.

How it currently works for the broader social sciences: Any member of the UCLA faculty who is engaged in quantitative research has the option of depositing their data sets with the ICPSR. The Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu> is, among other activities, a provider of long term archiving options to researchers involved in quantitative research. ICPSR is a membership based consortium of institutions of higher education. UCLA has been a member since the early 1970's. ICPSR resources are used by social science departments, the professional schools outside the College, and by the school of medicine.

Using details from the ICPSR catalog, a list of UCLA faculty who had deposited data was developed and they were interviewed. In this process 21 faculty members were identified as having deposited data at some point over a 25 year period. Due to deaths, retirements, leaving UCLA etc, there were 9 names remaining, and 5 agreed to be interviewed. These faculty members were contacted and asked questions on their behavior with respect to long term archiving of their research data. The sample size is small; a qualitative interview approach was followed.

Reasons for using depository services fall into 4 categories:

- Perceptions of resource impact on local archival services;
- Commitment to data sharing;
- Desire for secure, long-term preservation; and
- Campus OCGA or IRB and funding agency requirements.

Various comments on the kinds of support faculty members would like from local service units were also made. These four categories are summarized below followed by suggestions on next steps.

Perceptions of resource impact on local archival services

- Using ICPSR can result in lower costs to research process; faculty member has less to “do” with respect to making their data publicly available.
- There is a strongly held view that the amount of funding allowed in grant proposal budgets for the archival/deposit process is not enough to properly do the job; desire for local funds to augment grants.
- Preference to use local support at the time of grant preparation, as an aid in data collection and organization throughout the data collection process, for statistical assistance, and for help in preparation of data/documentation into publicly accessible versions. Researchers also say they would prefer to use local, known expertise to ensure a long term understanding of their research needs.

Next steps:

ICPSR serves those who are engaged in quantitative research and who collect data in a similar format. It is an adjunct to local support such as is provided by the ISSR Data Archive. Exploration of the campus should be carried out to determine if there are there other similar arrangements or local services for other disciplines or research data formats. Questions should focus on the nature of support provided by the local or external unit. Further, a search should be carried out from a discipline-specific perspective as to whether or not there are any multi-institutional repositories with which UCLA might engage. It will be important to know which disciplines are served in this way and by which agencies or organizations. Further exploration of faculty preferences and needs should be carried out.

Commitment to data sharing

- Data sharing is seen as the collegial thing to do; desire to share and help colleagues and students do research
- Data sharing is integral to the social sciences; it is the basis for secondary analysis research techniques; promotes scholarly dialog and advancement of knowledge and promotion of data sharing is the reasons local archives were established.
- Faculty members desire a longer window of time in which to analyze data and publish before making data public. There is a preference for using local archival services during this “embargo” period and using local services to handle transfer to ICPSR.

Next steps:

The campus should foster an environment of commitment to data archiving and long term preservation, whether or not the data can or should be shared beyond the original researcher's purview. This can be accomplished through policy and provision of training and identification of existing resources. The campus should explore where additional local resources are needed and where multi-disciplinary collaborations (due in large part to similarities in data format types) may be possible.

Desire for secure, long-term preservation

- ICPSR is perceived as having the proper tools for providing secure long-term preservation. This includes financial resources, expertise, facilities and physical space, and a commitment to standards ensuring a zero-loss policy. Data deposited at ICPSR are guaranteed to be maintained and useable well into the future.
- Local archives are perceived as having fewer or no resources for long term preservation; there are questions about guarantees for future usability of data deposited locally. Preference is to use a local archive for short term storage while analysis by PI is ongoing and transfer to ICPSR when data can be made publicly available.
- ICPSR provides quantitative researchers with a "no-cost" option for long term data management; since the university pays for the ICPSR membership there are no continuing costs for long-term maintenance. Use of local resources (for storage at a computer center, for example) usually requires additional maintenance fees to be paid by the researcher's grant or home department.

Next steps:

Having a local institutional repository is important in contributing to UCLA's prestige in particular areas of research output and in retaining institutional memory. The campus should endeavor to provide researchers with options and resources for at least some kind of local support over the short term and partner with multi-institutional, national or international repositories for the long term.

The campus should develop no-cost options faculty researchers can use for long term preservation and storage according to data format types and disciplines served. Budget augmentations for data storage costs at decentralized computing facilities should be provided by the university.

Campus OCGA or IRB and funding agency requirements

- Faculty members say they are knowledgeable about emerging federal, state and local funding agency depositing laws and policies; there is a perception that not following the policies will result in difficulty obtaining research funding.
- Conversely, faculty members feel they do not always know all the rules and how to apply them to specific projects. They would like to have easy to understand guidelines on when they do or do not need HIPPA, FERPA and IRB approval.
- Faculty members are learning to use new forms designed by local IRB/OCGA. There is a strong desire for simplified forms to be used in grant applications. There is a desire for a re-evaluation of the campus IRB involvement in certain kinds of data collection.
- ICPSR can be pre-selected as a suitable depository by researchers and is recognized by faculty and funding agencies alike as fulfilling the data deposit requirements for making research data publicly available.
- Faculty members would like support for the way their data is used once it is made public. They express concerns about ethical uses of data, data analyzed incorrectly or mishandled, and data used for political purposes.
- Faculty members desire that overhead monies from grants go directly to the faculty member's department.

Next steps:

Faculty members should receive continual up to date communication about campus policy and federal, state and local funding agency depositing laws and policies. Good tools for easily preparing data for deposit should be developed. Online resources providing guidance and links to clear instructions are needed. Depositories supporting a variety of data format types or research disciplines should be identified. The University should develop and communicate policies about ethical and knowledgeable uses of data for research and teaching. Faculty members should be provided with access to knowledgeable individuals who can advise them on policies. The role of the campus IRB in data collection activities should be reviewed and compared with similar units at other institutions.