

# BYOPanel – The On-the-Spot Assembled Panel on Responses to the OSTP Memo Responses

by Margaret Janz

## Research Data Access and Preservation

### EDITOR'S SUMMARY

A hastily arranged session was convened at the 2015 RDAP Summit in response to the 2013 memo from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) on research data policy and management. On the first day of the conference, planners solicited input on ways attendees are educating their communities on OSTP data policy requirements, resources developed and emerging issues and challenges in data management. Attendees voted to learn more about the University of Iowa's creation of a Research Data Interest Group, the National Institute of Standards and Technology's taxonomy of research data and archiving requirements and James Madison University's efforts to inform stakeholders on the OSTP mandate. At a short session the next morning, speakers from these institutions expanded on their first brief responses, sparking further questions and plans to carry on the conversation through social media and future meetings.

### KEYWORDS

information policy  
data curation  
research data sets  
educational activities

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In February 2015, while RDAP planning was well underway, federal agencies affected by the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) memo of two years earlier began to release their responses to it. Many of the librarians who were (and continue to be) tracking the release of these documents are also RDAPers. As such, a conversation on Twitter led to the request for an #OSTPResp panel at the summit for which planning was then ongoing. The program had already been set, but the RDAP15 planning committee decided to see how and when we could fit such a session into our two-day conference. We had 30 minutes at the beginning of the second day open that we'd previously been hoping to fill with a second keynote speaker and we decided this would be our best bet.

The planning committee came up with three questions to be answered by attendees:

- How are you educating your community about the new data policy requirements?
- What resources have you developed about the OSTP responses?
- What are some of the emerging issues that might be challenges for either your researchers or those who support data management at your institution?

On the first day of RDAP, we asked RDAPers standing in the hallway during the first break to answer the three questions on slips of paper. The responses were hung on poster board (on the backs of old event signs, thanks to Hyatt Minneapolis staff) and at lunch we asked everyone to put stickers next to those they wanted to hear about the most. The most voted for answers were as follows:

- Amanda Xu from the University of Iowa:  
Q: How are you educating your community about the new data policy requirements?  
A: Establish Research Data Interest Group with stakeholders from across campus, e.g., libraries, ITS, Office of Sponsored Research, digital humanities
- Regina Avila from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST):  
Q: What resources have you developed about the OSTP responses?  
A: NIST has developed a taxonomy of research data (pyramid) that describes consequences or requirements of metadata/archiving at each level
- Yasmeen Shorish from James Madison University:  
Q: What are some of the emerging issues that might be challenges for either your researchers or those who support data management at your institution?  
A: Bringing all stakeholders (OSP, faculty, admin) up to speed on all the various req's. I'm the sole conduit for this info (currently) and I'm concerned about message penetration.

We asked each writer to speak the next morning on our DIY panel to expand on their answers. Avila and Shorish agreed and Xu asked her colleague Sara Scheib to speak about University of Iowa's activities. And so the panel was set.

### And Then What Happened?

Scheib told us that the librarians at University of Iowa had reached out to other departments on campus to create a research data interest group. They have representatives from Information Technology Services, their Office of Sponsored Research, digital humanists and others in the group. Since the OSTP responses have come out, they've been meeting to go through each document line by line to make sure everyone is interpreting the implications the same way.

Avila was able to give a sneak peak at the as yet unpublished taxonomy

that's been designed by NIST. The new taxonomy gives seven levels of data: working, derived, publishable, published, resource, reference and standard reference. Avila also shared a pyramid diagram (Figure 1) to describe different layers of data types. The graphic is a nice way to think about how much data exists in each category. The pyramid's top and smallest layer is publications with data. From there it goes down to processed data and data representations; data collections and structured databases; and raw data and datasets. Defining these different kinds of data is a way for NIST to help researchers classify the types of data they might need to manage and helps NIST understand how to make policies for the different levels rather than applying blanket recommendations.

Shorish gave an answer that spoke to a theme of the Summit: being a research data services department of one. Her greatest challenge is getting

FIGURE 1. NIST data-level pyramid (<http://ow.ly/i/auJSp/original>)

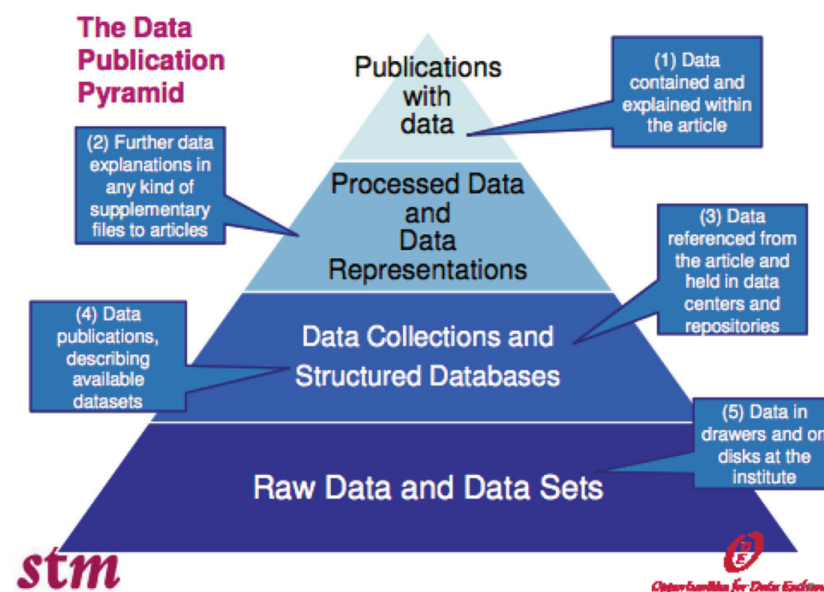


Illustration 1: Data Publication Pyramid

JANZ, continued

the word out about the OSTP responses. Even with support from her Office of Sponsored Projects it is a feat to keep track of all the varied proposed policies and let all of the researchers know about the changes to their responsibilities.

The session was very short with an unfortunately small amount of time for questions. Hopefully the gracious panelists were able to spark some ideas on partnering with other institutional units and offer some comfort to attendees in the knowledge we are not alone in responding to #OSTPResp – although we might be alone in our institutions.

The RDAP15 planning committee had a final question for attendees that we wanted to discuss at the end of the panel. Regrettably, 30 minutes is not a very long time at all, and the question was thrown to Twitter and informal conversations during breaks. I'd like to ask it again here to continue the important conversation around it: How can the RDAP community help support you on OSTPResp issues?

Talk amongst yourselves or tweet to @RDAPsummit or email the past or future planning committee members. All responses to questions asked for this panel can be found here: [bit.ly/rdapostp](http://bit.ly/rdapostp). ■