

Reuse at data repositories: User and staff perspectives on the dissemination process

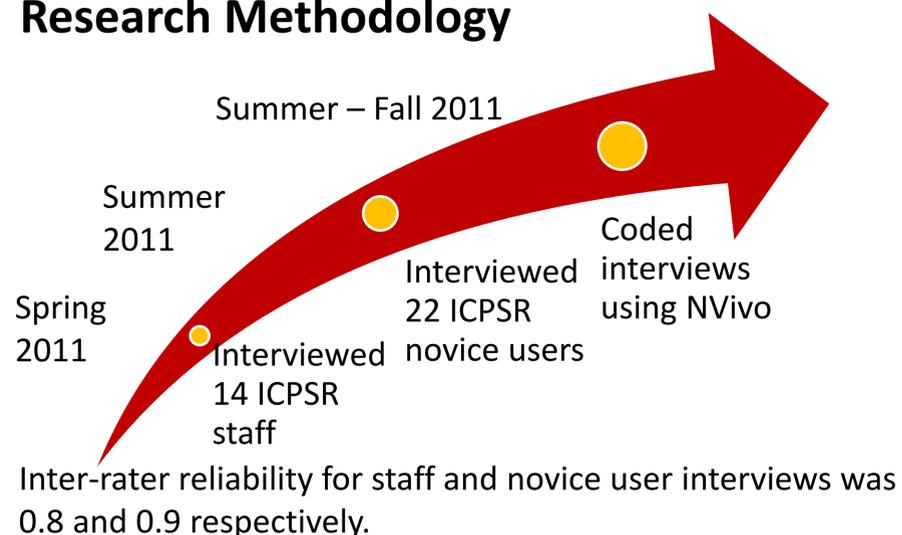
Introduction

- Successful repositories understand their designated communities of users.
- To obtain certifications, such as the Trustworthy Repository Audit and Certification (TRAC) or the Data Seal of Approval, repositories must demonstrate their understanding of designated communities.

This study compares the work ICPSR staff do given their understanding of their designated community of users to actual user perspectives of that work. More specifically, we ask the following research questions:

1. How do ICPSR staff anticipate data reuse?
2. What aspects of ICPSR staff work do ICPSR users recognize, value, or overlook?

Research Methodology



Users agree staff work aids their data discovery

Staff CB01: “We have a pretty elaborate system to take the files and get them into our various dissemination places.... Getting them in the search, getting them indexed under variable search.”

User CBU19: “A repository allows me to find datasets that I never would have considered previously or even knew about.”

Users recognize but do not value staff curation processes

Staff CB04 : “Built into this process is a set of quality checking. So the ongoing checks and balances throughout different stages of the data processing pipeline. And all data go through a very intense quality checking.”

User CBU02 : “Maybe they're ones that process everything and clean things up so that they're ready for the public. So I guess in that respect, I think they're useful. But nothing that I ... that would be sort of tangible on my side.”

Users are not aware of support staff can offer during reuse

Staff CB08: “A lot of what we do is outreach. People have to know the data is there and they have to know what we can provide.”

User CBU01: “I hadn't thought about [asking for help] I guess I assumed it would take some time ... to explain it in detail and have no assurance that the person ... will be able to help me ... I just sort of thought maybe it's not worth it.”

Next Steps

- Conduct interviews with ICPSR expert users and incorporate into data analysis to increase the generalizability of our results
- Do expert users have different views than novice users?

The DIPIR Project

This study is part of the DIPIR project. DIPIR is a multi-year initiative led by Drs. Ixchel Faniel (PI) and Elizabeth Yakel (Co-PI). Together with partners at The Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR), the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, and Open Context, they are studying data reuse in three academic disciplines to identify how contextual information about the data that supports reuse can best be created and preserved.

For more information, visit www.dipir.org



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