Fighting the Good Fight: Metadata in Research Data Management

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Dawn of the Scientific Method

Hasan Ibn al-Haytham (965-1060 CE)

Credited with first written description of the Scientific Method in his *Book of Optics* (circa 1021)

Stressed the importance of reproducibility
“If you can’t repeat it, it’s not science.”

Jamie Hyneman

Image: Hyneman in June 2010 by James Lin (igowerf) CC-BY 2.0
“Remember kids, the only difference between screwing around and science is writing it down.”

Adam Savage
Open Data Movement

Open Data: The public should continue to benefit from research paid for by public funds after the publication process is complete.
Representation of researchers discussing changes to academic publishing system
(with apologies to Frederic Remington)

A Quarrel Over Cards – A Sketch from a New Mexican Ranch by Frederic Remington
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How far behind is New Zealand?

- 2005 – Wellcome Trust starts open-access for research papers and accompanying data
- 2007 – US Congress makes NIH open-data policy mandatory
- 2012-13 – NIH & WT announce they will withhold funds for non-compliance with data sharing policies
- 2016 – First NZ funder with data management and publication requirements.
Research Data Management at New Zealand Universities

- No NZ universities have an established RDM programme
- Lincoln University is the first to conduct a RDM pilot project
How is Lincoln University fighting the good fight?

• Loads of behind the scenes prep work

• Outreach

• Data Management Plans

• Training
What are we currently teaching about metadata?

We focus on the basics.
Why aren’t we teaching discipline-specific metadata standards?

Staffing limitations

The standards are intimidating
Expected reactions to learning the details of discipline-specific standards

- Wailing
- Moaning
- Gnashing of teeth
- Denial
- Dominance displays
- Eventual acceptance

Panic by Nate Steiner, 2006, public domain
THANK YOU!