Working with DataCite and the British Library

What is DataCite?

DataCite is a Registration Agency for Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs). It is formed as a global network of national libraries, data centres and research organisations that work to increase the recognition of data as legitimate, citable contributions to the scholarly record.

The British Library is DataCite's agent in the UK. We work with universities, data centres and others in the UK who manage, archive and publish research data, to provide DOIs for datasets and other non-traditional research outputs. DOIs help to identify and link to data for the long-term.

How does it work?

Digital Object Identifiers can provide a link to data, no matter where it is located through time. This means that once it is cited, a dataset can still be found by readers of the paper years, if not decades after publication.

If data can be properly cited and reliably accessed, then those who create and manage it can gain more recognition for their contribution.

How can I get DOIs for my data?

We only work with organisations to provide DOIs, so if you are a researcher who would like a DOI for your data, please talk to your institution first. If you cannot find someone appropriate, contact us, **datasets@bl.uk**, we may be able to help.

If you manage a data repository and are thinking about how to encourage data sharing and citation, you can find out more about using DataCite on our website, **http://bl.uk/datasets**. If you have any questions you can also contact us, **datasets@bl.uk**

In partnership with

DataCite
FIND, ACCESS, AND REUSE DATA

DataCite Case Study:
ForestPlots.net at the University of Leeds

Photo Abel Monteagudo

Photo Simon Lewis

Gabriela Lopez-Gonzalez is an ecoinformatician, providing informatics solutions to ecological problems. She runs **www.forestplots.net**, a repository for long-term data from forest plots.

Forest plots are defined areas of forest, usually one hectare square, where data on the height, species name and diameter of every individual tree within the plot are taken. These data, collected every few years, tell us how the forest is growing and changing. Plot data from tropical forests around the world are being held and managed separately, but to answer the big questions they need to be standardised and available all in one place – so ForestPlots.net was set up in 2009, with the aim of providing a 'home' for tropical forest inventory plot data.

"This is very valuable information because you can't go back through time and collect the same information about the same tree from 20 years ago"

Despite their important contribution, the researchers who are out in the rainforest actively collecting the data found in ForestPlots.net are sometimes not able to participate in writing research papers. Gabriela wanted to find another way to recognise their work.

"We decided to look at giving Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) to our datasets, as a way of tracking where the data came from, citing it in publications and giving something back to all our data collectors"

The British Library only works at an institutional level to provide DataCite DOIs, so Gabriela contacted the University of Leeds Research Data Management Group for their advice on how to get DOIs for Forest Plots data. The University were already looking at the options for identifying datasets, so they supported ForestPlots.net as a case study for using DataCite. They worked with the British Library to get DOIs for ForestPlots.net as well as for other data being produced at Leeds.

"It was easy working with the British Library. Once we found out about the requirements for assigning DOIs, we made sure we could comply with all of them and then application was very straightforward"

In 2014 a paper[1] was published looking at the difference between maps of forest biomass produced from remote sensing data and maps produced from forest plot data. This was potentially controversial, so to aid transparency the data was made publicly available. This was the first DOI for a ForestPlots.net data package[2] and it can now be cited in a way that makes it easy to find and access.

"This should be standard practice, pointing the reader to where the data is, who collected it and the data use policy. It isn't, but I think it should be"

Gabriela is based at the University of Leeds, School of Geography. ForestPlots.net is supported by UK NERC, EU Framework 7, and the Royal Society.

[1] Mitchard, E. T. A. et al. 2014. Markedly divergent estimates of Amazon forest carbon density from ground plots and satellites. Global Ecology and Biogeography. **http://doi.org/10.1111/geb.12168**

[2] Lopez-Gonzalez G. et al. 2014. Amazon forest biomass measured in inventory plots. Plot Data from "Markedly divergent estimates of Amazon forest carbon density from ground plots and satellites." ForestPlots.net **http://doi.org/10.5521/FORESTPLOTS.NET/2014_1**