The Future of Data-Related Publications

Overview

For over fifteen years, the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) has built a continuously-updated database of citations of works using data held in the ICPSR archive. The Bibliography now references nearly 70,000 works, including journal articles, books, working papers, dissertations, and newspaper articles.

Linking data with related articles adds considerable value to the research process. It can “increase visibility, discoverability, and usage of both articles and data; provide context, avoid misinterpretation and incorrect usage; [and] ensure long-term availability of useful content and context.” It is also one of the most valuable and accurate methods of tracking usage – rated as better than page view counts or social media activity.

While collecting data citations is valuable, it remains challenging. “Data citation is [still] an emergent practice rather than a norm of scholarly attribution,” even with new community standards and more automated collection mechanisms. Since most data-related publications lack formal citation, by either not citing the data or using vague descriptions, the job of finding data use is “highly labor-intensive, requiring costly human judgment and guesswork.”

Project Goals

ICPSR is undertaking a systematic review of activities surrounding the Bibliography. This research project will play an integral role in the review process.

The first objective is to review usage. Who are the primary users? How are they using the citations? Why are they using the citations? How does citation usage affect data usage? How can ICPSR improve the overall Bibliography experience?

The second objective is to review the internal ICPSR data-related citation collection process. Can the process be improved to remove inefficiencies? How can ICPSR improve tie-in with...
journal workflows and other initial collection processes? What can ICPSR implement from recent international efforts, such as the Research Data Alliance-World Data Systems Publishing Data Interest Group and Force11?

7 https://rd-alliance.org/groups/rdawds-publishing-data-ig.html
8 http://www.force11.org