

# Demystifying the Data Interview

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## QUESTION

What would an archivist need to know before conducting an interview with a researcher regarding his/her research data and associated needs in curating or preserving this data?

## METHODS

- The authors analyzed the Data Curation Profiles (DCP) Toolkit to identify specific definitions, concepts, resources, and examples to provide a basic understanding of data curation.
- By compiling this information with additional resources for reference, the authors intend to help archivists take full advantage of the DCP Toolkit.

## ABOUT THE DATA CURATION PROFILES

- From 2007 - 2010, the Purdue University Libraries and the Library School at the University of Illinois conducted research on "Which researchers are willing to share data, when, with whom and under what conditions?"
- The results led to the creation of the DCP Toolkit
- The DCP Toolkit is designed to assist archivists and librarians in identifying the data management needs of researchers.
- The DCP Workshops are meant to train information professionals in the use of the DCP Toolkit.

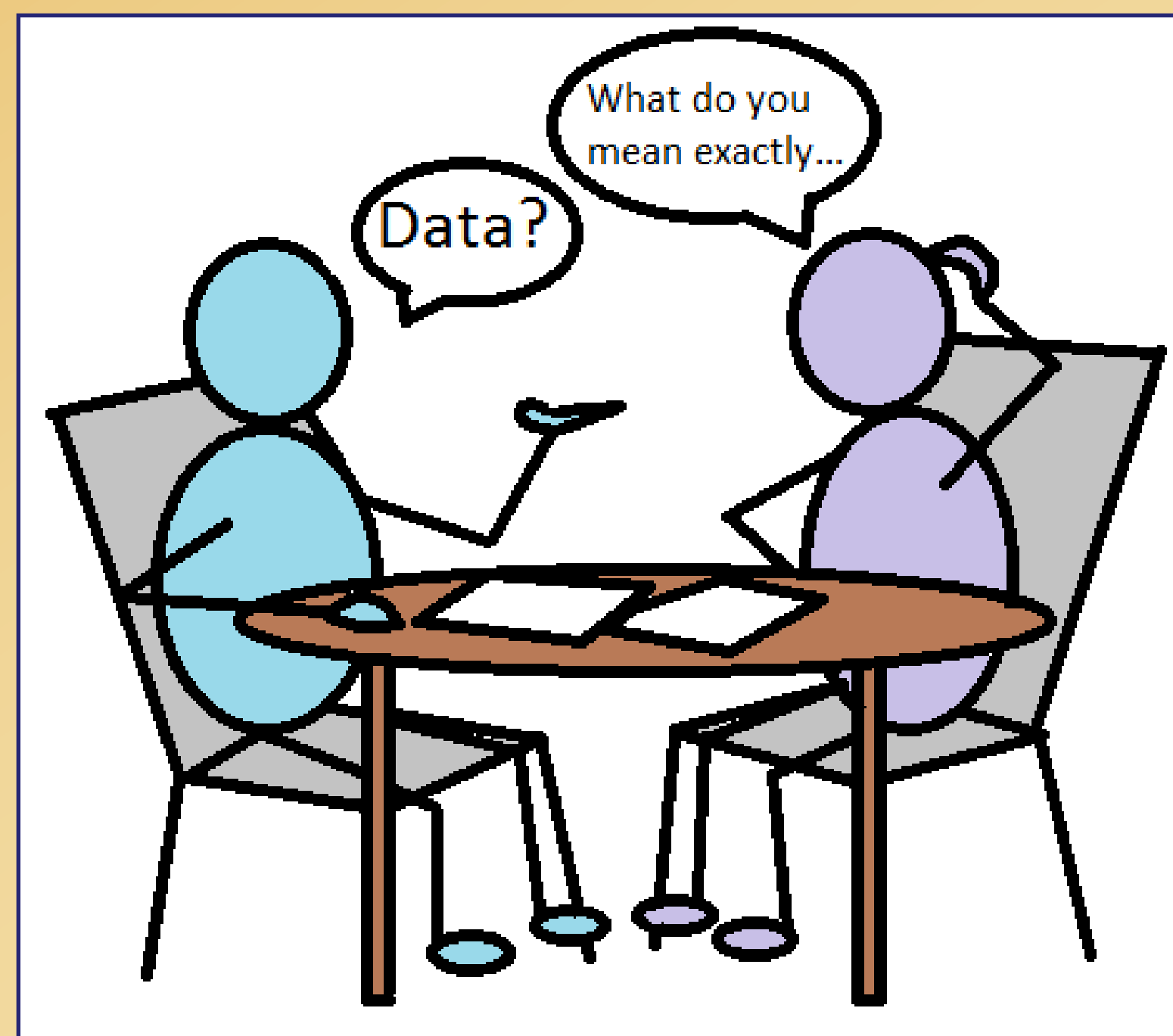
## Data

**Purpose:** A clear definition for "data" is essential for setting the context of a data interview.

**Challenges:** The term "data" is often defined very broadly based on environmental and individual perspectives.

**Examples of Data:** notebooks, data files, images, e-mails, surveys, videos, transcripts, drafts of publications.

**Selected Definition:** "Research data is defined as the recorded factual material commonly accepted in the scientific community as necessary to validate research findings" -OMB Circular A-110, Source: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars\\_a110](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_a110).



## Data Curator

**Purpose:** Archivists and librarians need to be able to explore how their knowledge, skills and perspective could be applied towards supporting researchers' needs without feeling overwhelmed.

**Challenges:** Data curators may come from all kinds of backgrounds and may be called upon to fulfill a wide range of roles requiring a variety of skillsets. Furthermore, the position of "data curator" has not yet been fully defined at many institutions.

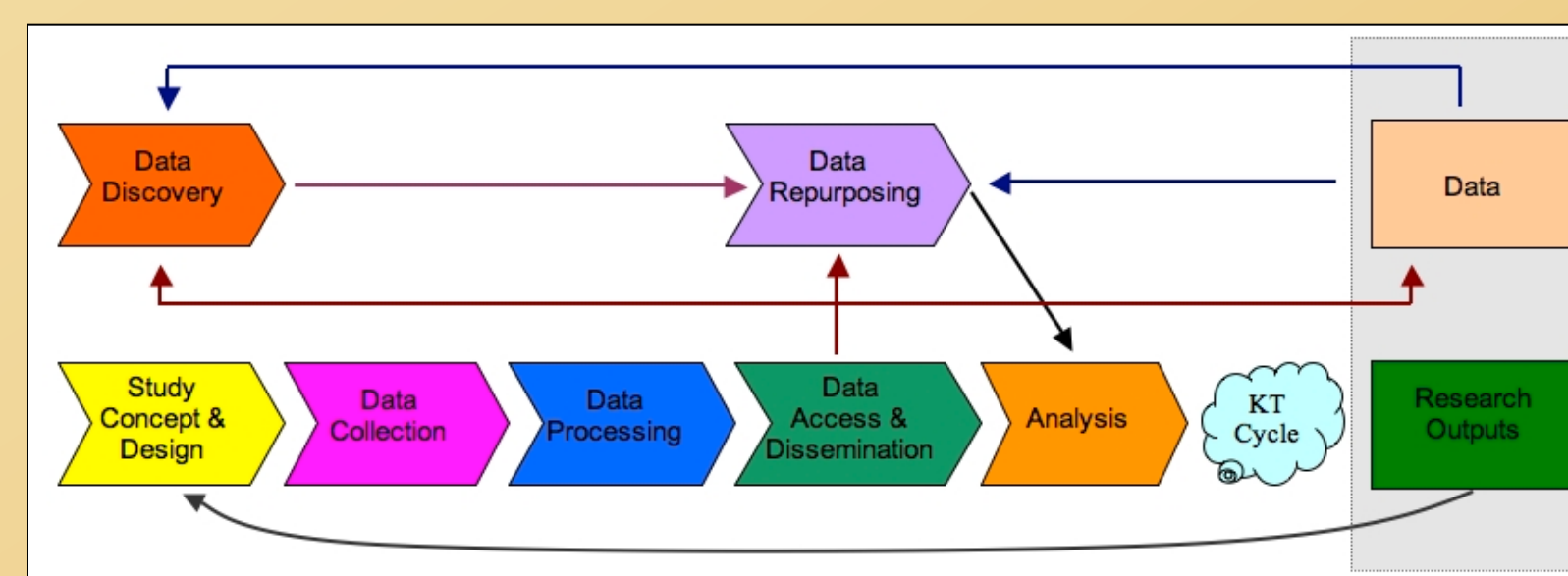
**Base Identity:** Broadly defined, an archivist or librarian with responsibilities relating to the curation and maintenance of data.

## Data Lifecycle

**Purpose:** Data curators need to have a reference guide to the stages that data go through as part of the lifecycle. Understanding the lifecycle helps data curators identify and understand researcher data curation needs.

**Challenges:** Each researcher may have their own definition of "data lifecycle" that may not apply to other research. Additionally, not all data may require curation.

**Selected Approach:** The stages of a data lifecycle can be broadly categorized into Raw, Processed, Analyzed, and Published. For an example of a data lifecycle, see the graphic to the right.



Humphrey, Charles. "e-Science and the Life Cycle of Research" (2006) Retrieved 4/20/10: <http://datalib.library.ualberta.ca/~humphrey/lifecycle-science060308.doc>

## Data Curation

**Purpose:** To understand or be familiar with the tasks and responsibilities that are generally associated with the term "data curation". Specific activities associated with curation are "appraisal" and "preservation".

**Challenges:** Not every dataset follows the same lifecycle or understands curation in the same way. A data curator may also find that a researcher asks for a task to be performed *after* the interview or has an unusual type of need.

**Selected Definition:** "The activity of managing and promoting the use of data from its point of creation, to ensure it is fit for contemporary purpose and available for discovery and re-use." - Lord, Macdonald, Lyon & Giaretta (2004) "From data deluge to data curation." Proceedings of the UK e-Science All Hands Meeting 2004, 31st August - 3rd September, Nottingham UK.

## Data Sharing

**Purpose:** Allows for transparency of how funding is spent, accountability for outcomes and their validity, and advancing research innovations.

**Challenges:** Researchers may be resistant to sharing data for multiple reasons, including the lack of preparation of the data for viewing by others, issues of ownership, control over its use, IP rights, and the lack of incentives to publish one's data.

**Selected Approach:** Rather than define "data sharing" itself we seek to provide enough background information on the challenges listed above for data curators to ask questions of researcher.

## RESULTS

- Data concepts, terminology and meaning often vary between various fields.
- Concepts do not necessarily have examples that can be easily referenced by librarians.
- These results informed the development of the DCP Workshops.

## CONCLUSION

- The results of this project will be further analyzed through:
  - o Assessing the impact of the training delivered in the DCP Toolkit Workshops.
  - o The effect of the workshop and DCP toolkit in enabling information professionals to conduct data interviews.
  - o Other sources such as the community forums on the DCP Toolkit website.

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- Data Curation Profiles Community <http://www4.lib.purdue.edu/dcp/>
- Resources for Digital Curators | Digital Curation Centre <http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/>
- Digital Curation | ICPSR (Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research) <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/curation/>
- Digital Curation: A How-To-Do-It Manual | Ross Harvey <http://www.neal-schuman.net/curation/>
- Digital Curation Exchange | A Space for all things 'digital curation' <http://www.digitalcurationexchange.org/>

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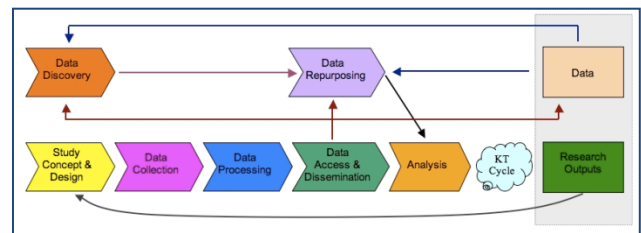
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## Recommended Resources

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<http://www4.lib.purdue.edu/dcp/>

*Resources for Digital Curators | Digital Curation Centre*

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*Digital Curation | ICPSR (Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research)*

<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/curation/>

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