

## Research Data Alliance (RDA) 18<sup>th</sup> Virtual Plenary Meeting

**3 – 11 November 2021**

### ***Fully virtual, fully global.***

RDA Plenary meetings are the twice-annual meetings where the members of the RDA meet to discuss possible new topics through Birds of a Feather (BoF) meetings, hold Working and Interest Group and Community of Practice (CoP) meetings, and conduct RDA business. These plenary meetings serve as important milestones in the life of the Work of RDA, especially in terms of achievements and outputs.

From March 2013 until October 2019, all RDA plenary meetings were in person events with remote participation facilitated.

Since March 2020, RDA has organized three fully virtual plenary meetings in collaboration with the local organisers (March 2020 – Australia, November 2020 – Costa Rica, and April 2021 - Scotland). The 18<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting was the first plenary to be fully owned and organised by the RDA Secretariat, responsible for the daily global operations, without support from local organisers.

To facilitate participation by the RDA's global membership, meeting components were organized across a series of international time zones. All sessions were recorded and available to registered participants on the Plenary event platform, Whova, until mid-December when they are freely available to the complete RDA community and public via the plenary web pages.

Some highlights from our 18<sup>th</sup> Virtual Plenary meeting:

- 626 participants from over 40 countries
- 81 sessions in total of which there were:
  - 12 BoF meetings
  - 36 Interest Group meetings
  - 17 Working Group meetings
  - Three Joint group sessions
  - One Community of practice meeting
  - Seven Plenary / Panel sessions
  - Four Networking sessions
  - Two poster “Minute Madness” sessions with [26 posters](#) from across the globe

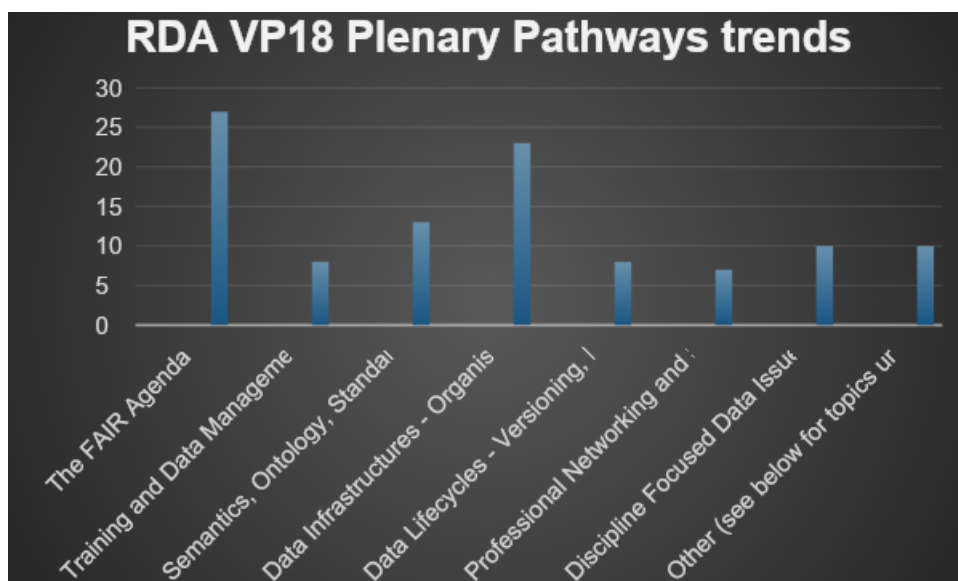
The best poster, voted by the participants, was awarded to Dorothea Strecker, Maxi Kindling, Vivien Petris and Yi Wan from Humboldt University of Berlin for their poster titled “[Research Data Quality Assurance Indexed in re3data](#)”.

## Plenary Pathways:

For new and more seasoned members of the RDA community, or the “RDA Family” as stated by RDA Secretary General Hilary Hanahoe in her opening address, the Technical Advisory Board (TAB) created a series of [Plenary Pathways](#), as a means to navigate the rich programme by the following topics / areas of interest.

1. The FAIR Agenda
2. Training and Data Management Planning
3. Semantics, Ontology, Standardisation
4. Data Infrastructures - Organisational to Global
5. Data Lifecycles - Versioning, Provenance, and Reward
6. Professional Networking and Social Aspects
7. Discipline Focused Data Issues
8. Other (see below for topics under "Other")
  - a. Environmental impact of data
  - b. Reproducibility, Curation of research outputs
  - c. Data citation, machine actionability
  - d. Data Stewardship
  - e. Policy Development
  - f. Reproducibility
  - g. Policy alignment

The graph outlines the number of sessions per pathway, giving an indication of the current “trends” across the RDA groups and their topics’ focus.



## Plenary and Panel Sessions / BoF Meetings:

An essential group of RDA Family members are the 65+ [Organisational members](#), organisations that adhere to the RDA guiding principles, and financially support the RDA. All the plenary and panel sessions and four Birds of a Feather (BoF) sessions were driven and organised by RDA Organisational Members.

### BoF Meetings

As key stakeholders in the community, Organisational Members were invited to propose BoF sessions,

which are new meetings to explore the appetite for global activity around a specific topic that could be transformed into either a focused Working or Interest Group.

### Plenary and Panel Sessions

- Hilary Hanahoe (RDA Secretary General), Leslie Hsu (Physical Scientist & Community for Data Integration Coordinator, US Geological Survey) and Susan Shingledecker (Executive Director, ESIP) were the panelists for the first panel session focused on **'Facilitating active communities of practice to address data challenges'**. The panelists ran a poll aiming to collect audience feedback and experiences around communities of practice - the results of which can be found [online](#). The presentation used is also available [online](#).
- Timea Biro - (Senior Coordinator, IT Center for Science, Finland), Melissa Cragin (Chief Strategist for Data Initiatives, San Diego Supercomputer Center, USA), Antti Pursula (EUDAT Head of Secretariat, IT Center for Science, Finland), Debora Testi (DICE Project Coordinator, CINECA, Italy), Eske Christiansen (Head of HPC Section, Danish e-Infrastructure Consortium) and Anders Conrad (COO DeIC, Denmark) were all on the panel session **'Combining Data community strengths and High Performance Computing opportunities'** which concluded with the recognition for further exploration of the challenges and opportunities of HPC and data convergence under the RDA umbrella.
- Hilary Hanahoe (Secretary General, RDA) and Natalie Harrower (Director, Digital Repository of Ireland) outlined the **RDA Financial Sustainability** models from 2022 with insights into the proposed membership models. More information on the session, as well as the relevant documentation and status updates can be found on the RDA website.
- **'Implementing FAIR: Funder policy updates, roadmaps, and next steps'**. A panel involving Keith Russell (Manager Engagement, Australian Research Data Commons), Fran Lightsom (Programme/Project Manager, US Geological Survey), Viv Hutchison (Chief, Science Data Management, US Geological Survey), Susan Gregurick (Associate Director for Data Science, US National Institutes of Health), Leslie Hsu (Coordinator USG Community for Data Integration, US Geological Survey), and Shelley Stall (Senior Director, US American Geophysical Union) focused on 'Implementing FAIR: funder policy updates, roadmaps and next steps'. The session started off with brief presentations from each panelist, focusing on the challenges of implementing FAIR across different disciplines for both data and software.
- Panel session focusing on **'Data and Software Sharing: The Role of Societies and Associations'**. This plenary session was chaired by Shelley Stall (Senior Director, US American Geophysical Union) and featured Angie Hunter (Development Editor, American Chemical Society), Greg Tananbaum (Director, ORFG) and Joris van Rossum (Director Research Integrity, STM). During the session, we were excited for some exclusive RDA VP18 news, as Greg Tananbaum announced a collaboration with the American Geophysical Union (AGU) and the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) to create a Society Community of Practice.

### Networking Sessions:

RDA's mission is to build the social and technical bridges that enable data sharing and re-use. The social bridge building has always been of great importance and value to the organisation and the community. While nothing replaces chatting to colleagues after a meeting or making new connections during the coffee and lunch breaks, offering networking opportunities to virtual plenary attendees is part of the planning and programme. Another important component of the RDA family are the RDA

Regions and Australia, Europe, France and the United States each organised a thematic networking session during Virtual Plenary 18. Many attendees also took advantage of the Whova App facilities to create and join conversations and ad hoc meetups.

### Feedback from Attendees:

Attendees were invited to complete the post event survey to provide their feedback and suggestions on all aspects of the programme.

*"All the breakout sessions I attended were well prepared and interesting, and enabled [us] to discuss the work done and future work. I think that it is the first time that I see this very high quality in all the sessions I attend [...]."*

The EOSC Finnish Forum sponsored four of its members to attend the meeting and they each wrote blogs about their experience, giving personal insights and perspectives. Readers are encouraged to read the short, informative blogs at <https://avointiede.fi/en/news/expert-blogs-18th-rda-plenary>.

Some highlights have been included here:

*"It's empowering to see so many people from all over the world with various backgrounds trying to tackle similar issues and not only exchange ideas but work together. RDA is a real community, and for me, that is the most important reason to get involved."* Jari Friman, Librarian and Data Support Specialist, Tampere University

*"To sum up, 18th RDA plenary presented an interesting and important line of work in respect to ethical research data use and its impact for individuals, communities, and our environment."* Egle Gedrimiene, PhD student and Research Data Management Specialist, University of Oulu

*"I learned a lot from the presentations during this Plenary. I hope in the future to attend this again, and maybe join some working or interest group."* Elina Mäntylä, Development Specialist, University of Turku

One comment rings particularly true and gives a great flavour of the RDA plenary meetings,

*"Attending the plenary gave me new perspectives on my work about new data-related phenomena and the development of the current research environment. In addition, I was impressed how this plenary brought together experts from many countries and research areas to discuss and develop recommendations and best practices in various fields."* Laura Niemi, Development Specialist, University of Turku

To see the RDA 18<sup>th</sup> Virtual Plenary Meeting programme, access the meeting recordings, and view the posters visit <https://www.rd-alliance.org/plenaries/rda-18th-plenary-meeting-virtual>.