

DATA CURATION NETWORK

Data Curation Network Sustainability and Transition Plan

A Report for Current Partners and Stakeholders, November 19, 2020

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Executive summary

We are a collaboration between data repositories run by academic institutions and non-profit organizations made up of individuals who have specialized curation expertise and work directly with data authors/researchers to assist them in the data sharing process for a wide variety of specialized data formats (e.g., MRI brain scans, instrument readings, crop data, crystallography).

We curate data by performing rigorous testing of the files/code and applying digital preservation best practices to improve the overall quality and reusability of research data. The DCN provides coordination, training, and infrastructure to match datasets needing curation with a curator in our Network. → So far, 195 data sets have been matched across the DCN since 2019.

We train and educate a growing community of data curator professionals. In addition to annual training for DCN staff, members of our Network teach multi-day workshops that are open to the broader community. → over 160 curation professionals have attended a DCN workshop since 2017.

We research and publish best practices for data curation. The DCN provides a platform for experts to come together around specialized topics and create standard operating procedures to help curators do our work better. → two dozen “data curation primers” have been published since 2018 on topics such as curating human subjects data, curating databases, and curating code packages in R and python.

We successfully grow our community. The DCN grew from 6 to 12 partner institutions over five years and received funding by the Alfred P Sloan foundation and the IMLS totalling \$862,994 in external awards.

Value proposition for institutions to join us

- The DCN is internationally recognized as a leader in data curation - and a successful example of innovative, efficient, cross-institutional partnership.
- DCN allows your data management librarians and staff to “do more with less” by specializing in specific data types and receiving expert help on the rest.
- Partners who contribute curator staff time and membership fees receive
 - curation services for data sets
 - training from curation experts
 - access to a vibrant professional network doing cutting edge work in data curation

How we plan to cover costs: The DCN costs approximately \$120,000/year to run and aims to become a sustainable organization. We seek membership agreements with our current 12 DCN partners to share the central costs, equaling \$10,000/year per partner. The University of Minnesota will serve as the fiscal home for the Data Curation Network and manage central costs (e.g., staff salary, software) per a membership agreement that will be negotiated annually.

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1.0 Introduction

The Data Curation Network is a collaboration of data curators, data management experts, data repository administrators, and disciplinary subject matter experts who represent academic institutions and non-profit data repositories that make research data available to the public. DCN data curators distributed across the Network are matched with data sets according to their technical and disciplinary expertise and review them using an established set of protocols. Our shared staffing model seamlessly enhances a repository's local curation service in ways that benefit the institution, depositors, and users of the data. The DCN has collectively curated [195 data sets](#) in 34 disciplines, directly supporting over 400 faculty.

The 12 current members in the DCN are (1) U of Minnesota, (2) Cornell U, (3) Dryad Digital Repository, (4) Duke U, (5) U of Illinois, (6) Johns Hopkins U, (7) Pennsylvania State U, (8) U of Michigan, (9) New York U, (10) U of California - Santa Barbara, (11) Virginia Tech U, and (12) Washington U in St Louis.

Our mission is to build a trusted community-led network that enables researchers to openly share data in ways that are findable, accessible, reusable and ethical. We do this by:

- Providing expert, domain-driven data curation services
- Creating, adopting, and openly sharing data curation procedures and best practices
- Supporting the training and development of an emerging data curator professional community
- Expanding into a sustainable entity that grows beyond our initial partner institutions

The DCN launched in 2016 with a one-year grant “Planning the Data Curation Network” funded by the Alfred P Sloan Foundation to the University of Minnesota. Starting with six partner institutions the DCN team developed our staffing model for launching a cross-institutional network for curating research data. (DCN, 2017).

Then in 2017, with funding from the Institution of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to Pennsylvania State University, the DCN began offering specialized data curation workshops (6 to date) reaching over 150 attendees. A capstone project of the workshop is a [Data Curation Primer](#), a written guide detailing the state-of-the-art for curating specific file formats. Over two dozen primers have been written by DCN curators and workshop attendees.

Starting in June 2018 the Data Curation Network (DCN) began a 3-year implementation grant (ending May 2021) from the Alfred P Sloan Foundation, and based at the University of Minnesota. A major milestone for this implementation phase grant was to “*Transition to a sustainable economic model, indicated by resource commitments from existing partners and demand from non-partner institutions for curation-as-a-service.*”

This document details that transition. Our plan includes a scaled approach toward cost recovery via a tiered membership model supplemented with new grant opportunities. In building this transition plan, the DCN team performed market research, identified a fiscal home, drafted a governance model, and forecasted how the DCN might engage the broader data sharing community and stakeholders.

1.1 Sustainability Planning and Market Research

Planning for DCN sustainability was incorporated early into our first planning phase grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to the University of Minnesota and six initial partners (DCN, 2016). The DCN team analyzed numerous cost models and sought input and advice from peer collaborations -- including the Cornell University-Columbia University 2CUL project, DuraSpace, the NSF DataNet SEAD project, CARL’s newly formed Portage Project, the Texas Digital Library, and the California Digital Library. The result was our 6-year plan for implementing and sustaining the DCN (fig 1), published in our DCN planning phase final report (DCN, 2017, p35).

Figure 1: Six Year Plan to Grow and Sustain the DCN

	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Support	Sloan 1-year grant	Sloan 3-year grant and in-kind			Membership, in-kind and future grants		
Timing	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
Phase	Planning	Implementation		Transition		Sustain and grow	
Partners	6 partners	8 / 10 / 12 partners = slow, controlled growth			Open to new membership		

To implement this 6-year plan we secured a three-year implementation grant, funded by Sloan and administered by the University of Minnesota, from June 2018-May 2021. In addition to piloting and testing our collaborative model for curating research data, this grant enabled us to hire an external consultant to help us define and test our sustainability plan. Following a successful request for proposals, LYRISIS was selected as the DCN’s sustainability consultant on the project.

From May - December 2019, LYRISIS and the DCN members performed market research with potential DCN members and stakeholders via in-person held focus groups with our 2019 DCN Advisory panel (fig 2) and phone interviews with numerous directors and collaborative project leaders. Based on the interview results, we identified three potential “Sustainability Pathways” for the DCN to consider and, in particular, LYRISIS recommended using a combination of these approaches over time (fig 3):

- Tiered Partner Program - Institutions of various sizes would become DCN partners at a tier with an associated annual partner fee.
- Stakeholder Program (Phased) - Focus a program around the original grant partners and, potentially, a very small group of closely aligned stakeholder institutions.

- Fee For Service - Would allow DCN to acquire revenue in a means not tied to a model exclusively focused on annual, ongoing contributions

The final report from this consultant work is published on the DCN website and may be applicable to other projects at a similar stage of development (Arp, Claerson, & Egan, 2020).

Figure 2: Members of the 2019 DCN Advisory Panel



1.2 Environmental Scan of Academic Data Repositories

Building on our past research on Association of Research Libraries (ARL) institutions (Hudson-Vitale et al., 2017), the DCN performed a website content analysis in 2020 of 114 peer institutional repositories (IRs) to assess “Data Sharing Readiness in Academic Institutions” (Johnston & Coburn, 2020).

The study indicated that 82% of the academic institutions (n=94) were publishing data either in a dedicated data repository (n=50) or in their general IR (n=44). The number of datasets observed totaled at least 24,178 datasets published by larger US and Canada-based academic libraries as of Jan 2020, on 17 different software platforms.

These results were an indication that the DCN market among ARL institutions was promising. Future focus group research with various stakeholders in more diverse sectors (including government, small- to mid-sized institutions, historically black and minority serving institutions, and disciplinary repositories) is in the early planning stages.

1.3 DCN Budget Anticipated for FY2022

The operating budget for the DCN in FY2022 anticipates \$120,000 in direct costs for 1 FTE DCN Coordinator, software, training and event costs, and outreach (fig 3). Since we are a collaborative partnership, we receive over \$300k in-kind contributions from the 46 individuals in the DCN.

Figure 3: DCN Operating Budget FY 2022 Summary

	Project Expenses	DCN	In Kind
1. Salaries and Benefits	DCN coordinator (100%)	\$87,750	
	Curators, Partner Representatives (1%-15% FTE)		\$300,023
2. Direct Costs	Technology (Jira, Wordpress)	\$3,600	
	Annual all hands meeting*	\$21,000	
	Annual training event	\$5,650	
	Outreach and promotion	\$2,000	
	Sub-Total	\$120,000	\$316,523
3. Administrative Costs	Invoicing, HR, legal, purchasing, audits, tech support (est. 15%)		\$18,000
	Total	\$120,000	\$334,523
	Projected Membership Rate (Total divided by 12)	\$10,000	\$27,877

* Since the annual DCN All hands Meeting is a critical community building event, this includes travel support for 2 individuals per partner institution to attend in-person (\$750 per person)

1.4 Administrative Home for the DCN

The team explored various options to administratively support the DCN beyond the grant. If the DCN is to sustain beyond a project, it must migrate to an administrative home that balances the desired growth and independence of the partners. Administrative support that falls into this category includes: fiduciary responsibility and oversight (invoicing, revenue management, audits, tax filings, adhering to all laws and regulations) and human resource administration (payroll, services, and benefits for DCN staff). In addition, some administrative homes could provide the DCN with technological, physical, and other auxiliary benefits (webinar tools, meeting rooms, access to experts and consultants).

To identify and select an appropriate administrator for the DCN, we considered several options (see Appendix B) including: seeking a 501c3 status and hiring third-party services to fill in critical gaps (e.g., tax, accounting), seeking umbrella support from one of our institutionally-affiliated consortia (e.g., Big Ten Academic Alliance), or merging with an existing non-profit organization (e.g., Dryad).

In our current stage of development, we felt that the best fiscal home for the DCN would be to remain

housed at one of the existing DCN institutions. Seeking continuity, we selected the University of Minnesota (U of M), which has served as the project lead since 2016, to serve as the DCN fiscal home. The U of M would administer the DCN:

- by operating out of the external sales office, which incurs no indirect or overhead costs
- via a membership agreement that would define the shared costs and be negotiated yearly (and coincide with the fiscal year)
- by invoicing, collecting, and managing membership funds to cover the costs of operating the DCN
- by allowing the DCN to draft and update the membership agreement annually to reflect any changes in how the DCN wishes to spend the membership funds
- by allowing the DCN to operate under an entity that maintains non-profit status

In this decision, the DCN will benefit from the myriad of central services and experts available to U of M staff, including the office of general council, tax office, human resources, financial services, audit, and controller's office. Specifically, the U of M sponsored projects office and related grants coordinator staff will also allow the DCN to continue to seek external funding from sources like Sloan and the IMLS. However, this will not reduce or limit the ability for other DCN partners to be the lead institution on future grants or to hire and retain staff who directly support the DCN. This flexibility will be reflected in individual membership agreements for each institution.

1.5 DCN Governance

Starting in FY2022, the Data Curation Network will adopt a lightweight governance model to reflect the shift from a grant funded project to a membership organization. More complete bylaws are under-development, but the primary roles are briefly outlined below to provide context to the following sections on membership:

- DCN Governance Board - One (1) representative from each “Partner” tier (detailed later in section 2.0) may serve in the board for a 1-year term. Individuals may, and are encouraged, to serve consecutive terms. All DCN staff (e.g., DCN Coordinator) serve ex-officio. Other membership tiers will not have representatives on the governance board in the first year but this will be evaluated as membership grows. The board’s primary responsibility is to meet at least once annually to review and approve the membership agreements that articulate all business and financial decisions for the coming year as well as approve unanticipated resource allocations in support of DCN activities.
- DCN Advisory Board - One (1) administrative level representative from each Partner Institution (Associate University Librarian or executive director) may (optionally) serve on the advisory board that meets at least twice a year. The advisory board member’s primary responsibilities are to stay informed of DCN activities, provide guidance and advice, and advocate for the DCN where possible.

2.0 DCN Membership Model

Starting in FY2022 (or July 1, 2021) the DCN will apply a multi-tier membership model where membership dues cover the central operating costs of sustaining the DCN (fig 4). All membership tiers will be vetted via an application process which will enable slow, steady growth over time (as demonstrated by our current

growth rate of 2 institutions per year since 2017).

Figure 4: Proposed DCN Membership Tiers for Pilot Testing in FY2022

Tier 1: Sustainer	This is the highest level of participation. Sustainers contribute in-kind data curator staff time to the Network and have full participation in governance.	\$10,000 for all benefits and up to 200 hours of curation
Tier 2: Member	Members at this tier may choose not to contribute in-kind curator staff, but may participate in other ways.	Rate TBD - Beta test this for at least 1 year with a limited number of institutions
Tier 3: Ambassador	Ambassadors invite DCN curators to teach a DCN “Specialized Data Curation Workshop” at their institution and workshop attendees may participate in DCN community events.	\$2,500 for one DCN workshop plus instructor travel
Tier 4: Sponsor	Institutions may show their support for the DCN by donating funds in support of annual events.	\$1,000 to sponsor annual All Hands Meeting

Tier 1: DCN Sustainer Institution

DCN Sustainer institutions contribute curator staff time toward networked data curation services and support the costs of central operations with annual membership dues. As vested stakeholders in the Network, Sustainers receive the most benefits and enjoy the most influence over the DCN as participants in our shared governance model.

❖ **What you get:**

- Radical interdependence via our cross-institutional collaboration
- Better data sets (move reusable for consumers, better publications for data authors)
- By virtue of the DCN's role as a recognized leader, Sustainer are able to influence public policy and shape the role of data curation in the larger open science and research ecosystem

❖ **Your organization will provide:**

- \$10,000 per institution in FY22
- 10% FTE (200 hours) spread across two or more curators
- A representative to participate in leadership activities (5% FTE)
- An advisory committee member (optional - 1% FTE)

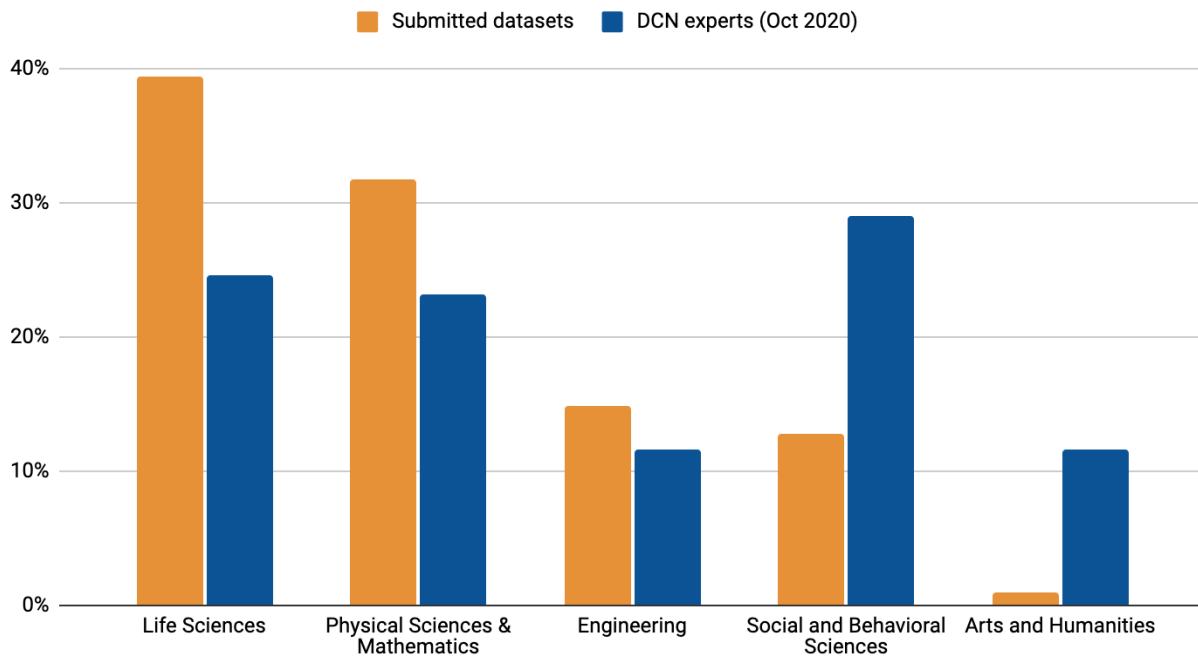
❖ **The DCN will provide:**

- Representation in DCN Governance:
 - 1 vote in DCN governance (via a designated DCN Representative)
 - (optional) one (1) AUL or Executive Director serving on DCN Advisory Board
- Registration and travel for two (2) participants for the annual DCN Community All Hands Meeting (AHM)
- 200 hours of data curation
- Access to the Network’s project management software for curation activities
- Access to DCN communication channels and expertise of curators
- Training for curator staff
- Opportunities for staff to participate in DCN professional development opportunities (conference presentations, grants, instruction, special interest group research, etc.)

Justification of Tier 1 membership rate

One of the key aspects of the DCN is our shared staffing model that relies heavily on specific, domain and format-type expertise (fig 5). Therefore, the DCN will prioritize adding Tier 1 members (DCN Partners that contribute in-kind staff to the Network), while exploring different ways for institutions to participate in the DCN via other tiers (in beta).

Figure 5: Data sets submitted to the DCN Jan 2019-Oct 2020 relative to DCN Curator expertise



This membership rate for DCN partners assumes 12 partners in FY22 and that all partners share the central costs of operating the DCN equally in the first year. And 200 curation hours reflects the 10% FTE contribution (equivalent to 192 hours) rounded up.

In order to maintain broad data subject and file type expertise in the Network, new members at this tier will be selected via an [application process](#) that has been successfully used for new partners since 2018 and includes a thoughtful and comprehensive on-boarding process. According to the 2020 DCN sustainability consultant report, "[b]roader membership could impact the current level of trust and disrupt the pace of current participants. Trust was a specific element highlighted in the focus group and phone interviews as a qualitative strength of the Data Curation Network" (Arp, Claeson, & Egan, 2020, p33).

Contingency Scenarios for Partner Institutions in FY22

The realities of COVID-19 have created a harsh financial landscape to navigate, just as the DCN begins to sustain and grow. As shown in fig 6, if the DCN is unable to transition with all 12 partner institutions in FY22, then either the costs for operating the DCN at current levels will go up (scenario #1) or service levels must go down significantly (scenarios #2-#4) .

Fig 6. DCN contingency scenarios for FY22

Scenario	Partner Institutions	Partner Annual Fee
1. DCN operating at 100% of current levels ~ \$120,000 cost	12	\$10,000
	10	\$12,000
	8	\$15,000
2. DCN reduces staff to .75 FTE, holds no events and operates at reduced capacity ~ \$65,913 cost	12	\$5,492
	10	\$8,436
	8	\$10,545
3. DCN eliminates staff and operates at severely reduced capacity ~\$12,000 cost	12	\$1,000
	10	\$1,200
	8	\$1,500
4. DCN offers no services and operates as a virtual community of practice ~ \$0 central costs		

Tier 2: Member Institutions (Beta test in FY22)

Because not all institutions are able to be involved at the highest level, tier 2 could be offered to institutions who wish to procure DCN Curation Services for a membership fee, but, without contributing in-kind curator staff time to the pool of expertise. Member institutions may receive fewer benefits than tier 1 (e.g., voting rights in governance may be limited, etc).

Because this tier is untested, the DCN will test Tier 2 in 2021-2022 by inviting beta testers for no cost and tracking the internal costs of this model. We will survey the beta testers and DCN curators to get their feedback, and better understand the feasibility of this option before formally implementing this option.

Tier 3: Ambassador Institution

Criteria:	US-based institutions, consortia (internationals would be considered case-by-case)
Fees:	Travel for 3 DCN instructors Opt 1: \$2,500 + institution covers travel (flights, hotel) costs for instructors, paid direct to individuals. Opt 2: \$5,500 flat domestic rate. DCN handles all logistical costs of travel for 3 instructors.

Individual experts from the DCN will offer specialized data curation training using a set curriculum (1.5 day event) to staff and other attendees of non-member institutions. Such training will help the Network grow its potential membership base, and by sharing our knowledge and experiences, we fulfill our mission to expand library capability to provide data curation services writ large.

Participation in training work is voluntary for all DCN individuals and direct compensation is in the form of service to the profession (e.g., not part of their staff-time contributions to the network). Current instructors are all US-based so international requests will be handled on a case by case basis.

Justification of costs: The DCN has offered six workshops in the past and therefore the costs are well known. The market outlook for this tier is good as we've had several requests to provide training (eg., Canadian Data Curator Forum, etc.) and this membership level allows us to continue to meet this need while recovering costs and sustaining the DCN.

Tier 4: Sponsor Institution

This tier is for sponsors (e.g., data repositories, publishers, federal agencies, or for-profit organizations) that wish to support data sharing and curation. This tier is equivalent to event sponsorship and the funds will be used to offset the costs of hosting the annual All Hands Meeting.

Potential benefits could include:

- Logo and sponsorship information will be included in a blog post on the DCN website
- 1 individual is invited to give a brief presentation at the All Hands meeting
- DCN governance board will approve any written or visual marketing material mentioning the DCN prior to release

The DCN would also be open to collaborating with data sharing initiatives (e.g., AGU Enabling FAIR data effort, US Go-FAIR) or peer organizations (eg., COAR, Portage) that wish to align efforts in a formal way.

3.0 Potential Fee-based Services

While the DCN provides services and benefits to its member institutions, there could be other ways in which non-member institutions may leverage the DCN on an ad hoc basis. For example, some institutions may look to the DCN for guidance on starting up or reestablishing their local data curation capacity. A benefit to offering à-la-carte services would be to offset, or even eliminate, membership fees for DCN partners contributing staff time to the Network (fig 7).

While this strategy may ultimately aid in sustainability, there are considerable trade-offs to this approach. In order to bring in revenue covering the costs and efforts of multi-institutional staff, the DCN will likely need to become an independent 501(3)c and operate as a non-profit, separate from the University of Minnesota. In addition, each DCN Partner has different rules and regulations about how its staff may (or may not) do external work. Therefore, to avoid these complications (at least for now) the DCN will only provide membership service offerings and carefully monitor demand for other one-off services as we evolve and grow.

Fig 7. Potential Fee-based Services by the DCN

Type	Service	Rate
<i>Curation</i>	Curation services for data	\$ per curation hour
<i>Training</i>	Introductory webinar	Free
	Workshop on site	\$ (includes travel for instructors)
	Workshop at conference	\$ (includes travel for instructors)
<i>External Review and Consultations</i>	Site visit to advise on setting up local curation services	\$
	Staffing and workflow models for setting up a data repository	\$
	Data repository technology showcase	\$

4.0 External Funding

Building on the success of grants from Sloan and IMLS, the DCN will continue to seek funding opportunities that will strategically grow and support the Network. Potential areas to explore include supporting a growing data curator profession via a coordinated Community of Practice, researching faculty curation

needs for “Data Communities” in partnership with Ithaka S+R (proposal submitted), building models of data services maturity for mid- to large academic institutions (proposal submitted), extending our training efforts (proposal submitted), and further our research on the value of curation. All DCN partner institutions are encouraged to take leadership on future grants that may engage the DCN.

5.0 Summary

The DCN has grown from a concept to a fully functioning organization in just 4 years. We have gained [considerable recognition](#) inside and outside of the library community and are looked to as a model of an innovative and much-needed multi-institutional partnership. We have a proven track record of achieving our goals in a systematic, thoughtful, and sustainable way. While there will undoubtedly be changes and iterations to the Network as it continues to evolve in response to community needs, the DCN has already proven itself to be a smart investment. With support from Sloan, we were able to launch. With the support of our members, we will continue this highly productive and beneficial partnership.

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Appendixes

Appendix A: Data Curation Network Value Proposition

The DCN provides a model for partners of all sizes to develop or to supplement local curation expertise with the expertise of a resilient, distributed network, and it creates a funding stream to both sustain central services and support expansion of distributed expertise over time. DCN will accelerate local capacity, strengthen collaboration between libraries and disciplinary projects, and significantly enhance libraries' collective voice in conversations about the future of research data.

Large academic research university library members/partners

- Access to expertise across more disciplines than each would be able to develop alone
- Data curation staff receive standardized training and ongoing professional development
- Smooth and stabilize services during times of staff transition and shortage

Liberal arts/teaching intensive college libraries

- Provide critical new data curation services even without the local staff
- Where applicable, a local solo data curation specialist joins a larger, robust network

Researchers at colleges and universities

- Gain access to rich data curation expertise for a wide variety of data.
- Multi-institutional collaborations benefit from the same quality DCN services and seamlessly work across the various co-PIs.

Disciplinary repositories

- Receive better, more valuable data submissions from DCN partner institutions and customers
- Potential to partner with the DCN to expand the scope of curation support for the disciplinary repository to new and/or less frequently encountered data types.
- More researchers directed to a disciplinary repository thanks to the broad network of institutions participating
- Potential funding source as consumption scales, should the disciplinary repository seek to join as a partner

Publishers

- Knowledge that data curation by a DCN partner is more valuable
- Ensure greater trust, reproducibility in the publications → fewer retractions

Funders

- High-quality data curation services are provided to academic institutions at scale
- Less "waste" of procuring redundant services at high costs at each separate institution.

Appendix B: Fiscal home pros/cons

Option A: DCN Partner institution. The DCN could continue to be supported by one of the academic member institutions (currently the University of Minnesota).

Pros

- Comparatively cost effective to the other solutions
- Reduces risk (large, experienced campus research infrastructure)
- Leverages expertise and resources (Legal, HR, IT, AV, meeting rooms/space, procurement, grant management, catering....)
- Consistency (Universities are at low risk for bankruptcy, rising/unpredictable costs)
- Trusted agent
- Ability to migrate the DCN to another institution with change in leadership (incurring startup/transfer costs)
- Already a non-profit organization (tax exempt, etc.)
- Continuity during transition

Cons

- If needed, migrating the DCN to another institution would incur startup/transfer costs
- Not many incentives for the host institution other than visibility
- Conversely, visibility could create “jealousy” from other member institutions

Examples: HathiTrust (U of Michigan), arXiv.org (Cornell)

Institutions to consider:

- Any of the DCN partners
- University of Minnesota (for continuity)
- Private institutions may enable the DCN to avoid idiosyncratic state-based rules

Option B: Consortia. The DCN could be supported by a consortium.

Pros

- Could help focus efforts
- Could provide a “built-in” pool of supporters
- Demonstrated success in the past
- May offer broader reach to institutions within the consortia
- Established relationships and collaborations

Cons

- Could be seen as exclusive
- Must be supportive to members from outside that consortia and, potentially, outside of universities altogether

- May pull the DCN in certain directions that align with consortia mission

Examples: Hathi Trust (initially out of CIC/BTAA), BTAA GeoPortal

Consortia to consider:

- Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA)
- TRLN
- MCLS - consortial that is hosting Reshare
- ASERL

Option C: Independent 501c3. The DCN could become a 501c3, operating independently and outsourcing any needed services, such as accounting and fiscal sponsorship.

Pros:

- Potentially more nimble
- Not beholden to another organization for rules and regulations or mission

Cons:

- No safety net
- DCN bears full costs in terms of overhead, bylaws, etc.
- Unknown legal and financial risks
- Lack of expertise establishing and operating a 501c3

Examples:

- Minnesota Library Association worked with a fiscal agent and lost money due to mismanagement. They also experienced the companies getting bought out and had to switch three times.
- Software Carpentry

Examples of specific fiscal sponsors:

- NumFOCUS
- Code for Science and Society
- Community Initiatives (Software Carpentry)

Option D: Bundling. The DCN is supported by a larger organization and is packaged as a benefit of their membership fees.

Pro

- Members may be more likely to stay involved over time
- Potential for greater perseverance in difficult times
- Potential traction because of coupling to an established entity

Con

- Managing the relationship with other entities which may have different goals
- Limits reach based on who can/does participate in the larger organization (e.g. ARL)

Packaging with others to consider:

- Dryad
- ARL
- CLIR/DLF

Option E. Umbrella Organizations. The DCN is supported by an umbrella organization.

Pro

- Umbrella organizations are highly experienced in hosting
- Provides “neutral community facilitation”
- Provides administrative support services
- Other efforts have reported good experiences (e.g. Library Publishing Coalition with Educopia)

Con

- Potentially higher overhead administrative rate
- Could have differing goals in terms of mission or operational directions

Organizations that host projects

- LYRISIS
- Educopia

Example: Library Publishing Coalition (with Educopia)