



# Data Seal of Approval Overview

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# DSA: What You Need to Know

- Basic, lightweight certification mechanism
- 16 Guidelines for Trusted Digital Repositories
- Guidelines that relate to Data Producers (3), Data Repository (10), and Data Consumers (3)
- Self-assessment, no external auditors or site visit
- Peer-reviewed process supervised by DSA Board
- DSA granted for a period of two years
- Online tool for self-assessment and review



# History and Context

- Initiated by DANS in the Netherlands in 2005, first version presented in 2007
- Internationalized and handed over to international board in 2009
- First assessments done in 2010
- Now 35 repositories with the Data Seal, with another 35 in progress
- Started in social science and humanities but now expanding in disciplinary scope



# Objectives

- Assure data producers that their data are reliably managed and preserved
- Instill confidence in funders that data in which they have invested will be available for re-use in the future
- Provide a transparent view into repositories to enable data consumers to assess them



# Principles

The DSA is intended to ensure that data are:

- Available on the Internet
- Accessible
- Usable (file formats)
- Reliable
- Citable (can be referred to)



# Compliance

- Minimum level of compliance for each guideline
- Must be met to receive the Data Seal of Approval
- Compliance levels will be evaluated and will increase as:
  - Best practices emerge
  - Compliant tools become available
  - Implementation occurs



# Guidelines

## Guidelines Relating to Data Producers:

1. The data producer deposits the data in a data repository with **sufficient information for others to assess the quality of the data** and compliance with disciplinary and ethical norms.
2. The data producer provides the data in **formats** recommended by the data repository.
3. The data producer provides the data together with the **metadata** requested by the data repository.



# Guidelines

## Guidelines Related to Repositories:

4. The data repository has an explicit **mission** in the area of digital archiving and promulgates it.
5. The data repository uses due diligence to ensure **compliance with legal regulations** and contracts including, when applicable, regulations governing the protection of human subjects.
6. The data repository applies **documented processes** and procedures for managing data storage.



# Guidelines

## Guidelines Related to Repositories:

7. The data repository has a **plan for long-term preservation** of its digital assets.

8. Archiving takes place according to **explicit work flows** across the data life cycle.

9. The data repository assumes responsibility from the data producers for **access and availability** of the digital objects.



# Guidelines

## Guidelines Related to Repositories:

10. The data repository enables the users to **discover and use the data and refer to them** in a persistent way.

11. The data repository ensures the **integrity** of the digital objects and the metadata.

12. The data repository ensures the **authenticity** of the digital objects and the metadata.

13. The **technical infrastructure** explicitly supports the tasks and functions described in internationally accepted archival standards like OAIS.



# Guidelines

## Guidelines Related to Data Consumers:

14. The data consumer complies with **access regulations** set by the data repository.

15. The data consumer conforms to and agrees with any **codes of conduct** that are generally accepted in the relevant sector for the exchange and proper use of knowledge and information.

16. The data consumer respects the applicable **licenses** of the data repository regarding the **use of the data**.



# Procedures

Online tool: <http://www.datasealofapproval.org>

1. Applicant completes the initial application form and starts filling out the assessment. The Board assigns a reviewer.
2. Once the assessment is finished and submitted, the reviewer typically completes the review within two months.
3. If there are any issues, the reviewer sends the assessment back to the applicant with a request for clarification/ amendments and gives the applicant a deadline to respond.
4. If there are no further issues and all guidelines meet the minimum compliance level, the DSA is awarded!



# Benefits and Value

- Good basic certification standard to show trustworthiness
- Emphasis on transparency and raising awareness
- Community- and peer-based rather than top down
- Less labor- and time-intensive, less costly, less “threatening” than some other standards
- Meaningful interaction with peer reviewer
- Seal carries meaning that is easily recognized and enhances the repository’s reputation



# Looking Ahead

- In process of activating the DSA General Assembly to bring on more peer reviewers and ensure sustainability of the effort
- Working with World Data System on harmonizing guidelines and procedures between the two organizations
- Have created a first draft of common requirements for basic certification
- Ultimately may lead to wider global framework for certification



# Questions?

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