

GORC-IG Response to RDA comments on GORC Interest Group: Typology and Definitions

Context

Version 0.9.1 of the GORC Interest Group: Typology and Definitions was submitted to the RDA Community by the GORC-IG as a supporting output on May 11, 2023.

Three sets of comments were received: two via the comment mechanism on the RDA website, and one via email to the RDA Secretariat.

The GORC-IG Chairs considered these comments at their meeting on July 6, 2023, and produced an updated version. This document explains the rationale behind the updates that were made (and not made) to the Typology and Definitions.

Comments on Document

Scope

NOTE: Comments are in italics, responses in normal text.

#1: Care should be taken to ensure a human-centric approach. This includes a clear distinction between core data processing elements and core human infrastructure elements.

Response: the Chairs believe that the typology diagram makes it clear that the human aspects of the commons relate to 5 of the elements, while the technical aspects relate to only 4 of them.

#2: As part of this consideration, this typology appears to lack consideration/awareness of the critical roles played by law and ethics in digital research commons.

Response: This is an important point, and additional text has now been added to the definitions for Rules of Participation and Access and to Governance Structures to make this clear.

#3: The element of 'setting' or 'context' might be included as it is determinative for values, provenance, and intended uses.

Response: Agree, and text has been added to the Scope definition to make this clearer.

#4: You do not describe the element of 'quality' ('reliability', 'integrity') of data, tools, or systems. Providing only a formal listing in your typology of categories and definitions does not provide a sufficient

basis for utility, trustworthiness, or (eventually) the 'the common good' you seek to serve. This may also hinder the operationalization of this important work.

Response: This was discussed at some length. It was decided, firstly, that quality as an absolute measure is an unhelpful way to assess things; "fitness for purpose" is better as what is not appropriate in one setting might well be desirable in another. Secondly, either quality or fitness for purpose are not elements *per se*. They are attributes of all of the elements. Indeed, one could argue that the fitness for purpose of a given commons in a given context is an emergent property of all of the commons elements.

Contents

#5: Mapping is a good example [of a type of physical collection]

Response: Agreed, and this has been added.

Sources

#6: Please add - Remote Sensing Sensors eg Earth Observation, Satellites, photogrammetry and drones

Response: Agreed. Added.

Governance Structures

Response: Text already added to respond to comment #2.

Rules of Participation and Access

Response: Text already added to respond to comment #2.

Sustainability

#7: Sustainability: for me sustainability is not only about resources and funding, It also includes to define and maintain a strategy for sustainability, e.g. define and develop the technical and organisational aspects with sustainability in mind, not limited to the procurement of resources.

Response: Agree, and the definition has had its wording updated to reflect a wider understanding of what is needed for true sustainability.

Interoperability

#8: Interoperability: I would add 'discoverability' among the capacities enabled by interoperability, even if it is properly said that that they are not limited to the two which are currently cited.

Response: Agree, and discoverability has now been added to this definition.

#9: The element 'interoperability' could perhaps be better categorized and defined. An additional element of 'interconnectedness' could be added to support the interest in relations between and cooperation among various digital research commons.

Response: Text on how interoperability can support cross-commons usecases has now been added to address this.

Standards

Based on discussion among the chairs, this has been updated to:

- Include the role of "conventions", which are less formal and strict than "standards" as they are still a repeatable, harmonised, agreed and documented way of doing something within a smaller community and do not need to be formally recognized by a specific standards body.
- Recognise the distinction between de facto and de jure standards

Research Objects

#10: Research object: when working on the standards in the relevant GORC TG we would like to be able to extend the concept of 'research object' to e.g. the instruments used to perform the observations used in the research (it would enable for instance to include straightforwardly the instruments among the items which may have a PID). For an astronomer, an instrument is a research object indeed, even in the data context.

#11: the RDA comment above on 'instruments' should be addressed, with an indication that 'instruments' should be considered as an essential element of a typology of commons, even if you do not intend to include instruments as an object of study for this IG, this typology. It is of importance for science and society that we are aware of the inherent role and impact of instruments in the (digital) measurements and descriptions we provide of phenomena.

Response: This generated a significant discussion between the Chairs. Eventually, we agreed that the idea of a commons needed to have a boundary drawn around it, and that adding instruments to the idea of research objects would open up a whole range of possible additions: computer simulation outputs, surveys, social science sentiment analysis, etc. We recognise the role of instruments as a key modality for digitising observed phenomena, but it was decided to leave these out of scope for now, noting that there is a new [RDA research hardware group](#) and that we could review this decision later once their outputs are available.