



RESEARCH DATA ALLIANCE

rd-alliance.org

Research Data Alliance Foundation

Hilary Hanahoe, Secretary General

Rutherford Appleton Laboratory
Harwell Oxford
Didcot
Oxfordshire
OX11 0QX
England

March, 18, 2020

RDA 15th Virtual Plenary Meeting Opening Address- 18th March 2020 – Hilary Hanahoe, RDA Secretary General

Hello.

One of the many things I love about my role is the plenary meeting. It is so rewarding to meet the many “seasoned” and new people in the RDA family, to catch up with them on what has progressed since the previous meeting and to understand the expectations and hopes of those who are joining us for the first time. I was very much looking forward to the Melbourne meeting. Having spent three weeks in Australia last year raising awareness of the Research Data Alliance, I was looking forward to seeing the Australian data community share their achievements and challenges with other international experts and then understanding the integration of new members into existing groups and to see the launch of new ideas in RDA.

Seven years after the launch of RDA, this was our first opportunity to hold a meeting “down under”. We were fortunate to have CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation) host the Plenary meeting with the support of ARDC (Australian Research Data Commons). They worked so hard to put together an amazing event, attracting almost 200 Australian participants and over 350 people worldwide.

I am truly grateful to CSIRO for underwriting the meeting and particularly all the team who were involved there for their hard work in planning what would have been an amazing taste of Data in Australia. It can be unfair to pick out people but I would like to particularly thank two people from CSIRO – Brendan Dalton and Cynthia Love– who have been so generous with their time, ideas, skills and expertise and who shared and agreed with the very difficult decision to cancel the event, despite the financial implications. Their thoughts, as were those of all of the organizing committee, were only on the health and safety of the delegates.

I would also like to thank ARDC who were supporting the meeting and our RDA champions in Australia, Rosie Hicks, CEO and all the staff in ARDC who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to support the organization and promotion of the meeting from the outset. I must give a very special shout out to Andrew Treloar and Stefanie Kethers who have been phenomenal from the

research data
sharing without
barriers

very beginning of the organization of the plenary. As RDA old timers, involved since the launch in 2012, they ensured that the RDA plenary in Australia would have offered the best of RDA and Australia in the programme. They have been instrumental in the definition of the virtual programme and I am so so grateful to them for their dedication.

Many thanks to the sponsors of the meeting AARnet, SAGE Publishing, Springer Nature, the Web of Science Group, a Clarivate Analytics company, who had committed financial resources to support the costs of the event. I am very sorry that you did not get the opportunity to have the visibility your deserved.

One of the aspects that saddens us the most, is that those new members to RDA did not get the opportunity to feel the vibes, experience the family atmosphere and make the physical connections with colleagues. I hope that we will be able to organize something in Australia in the future but for the moment, I would invite you to sign up to the RDA in Australia national group that is open on the RDA web site and where Australia specific news, events, webinars, of interest to the community is available. Search for the group and click JOIN.

For all plenary meetings there are two particular bodies of RDA that dedicate a huge amount of time, effort and resources – namely the Technical Advisory Board (TAB) and the Secretariat. Their amazing commitment shouldn't need to be highlighted but I would like to thank them from the bottom of my heart for their commitment. Within 24 hours of cancelling the meeting, they had already discussed and started planning the Virtual Plenary meeting together with Stefanie and Andrew. The Secretariat is a particularly hard working body of RDA, their dedication goes above and beyond and in the face of great adversity they take all challenges thrown at them and find solutions. Thank you Stefanie, Yolanda, Alex, Bridget, Daniel, Fotis, Ilaria, Marieke, and Sara.

So we're turning the 15th plenary meeting into a virtual plenary

To honour the immense amount of work that many of you had invested in preparing your breakout sessions for the 15th Plenary meeting, we will run a Virtual plenary programme from 18 March 2020 through to 10th April 2020. All the details are available online from the RDA web site – rd-alliance.org With this short address, I am happy to open the Virtual plenary meeting and hope that many of you will actively participate in it. You are all welcome.

This very unusual moment that we are living in now and the reactions to the cancellation have made me think a lot more on the Research Data Alliance and while travelling back from Australia these days, I summarise these thoughts into the 5 Ps:

1. **PEOPLE:** RDA is a community of over 10,000 people across the world, many of whom contacted me and sent messages using different channels over the past few days to

show their solidarity, their support and their dedication. RDA is fortunate to have such a wonderful group of PEOPLE.

2. **PASSION:** the reactions also demonstrate the amazing PASSION that you all have for your work and for RDA. Your willingness to change plans, support, facilitate and engage remotely is what makes RDA a true family. Thank you for your PASSION
3. **PROGRESS:** There are members who have never attending a plenary meeting yet they actively contribute to RDA activities or leverage on outputs and knowledge that we make available via the web platform. Use this time, please, to continue to make PROGRESS on the hugely important solutions and discussions you are having as groups, continue to demonstrate the value of RDA as a virtual community.
4. **PRODUCTS:** RDA already has 32 outputs, 32 components that can be implemented and used to make a difference, to support data challenges that many organisations, communities, scientific disciplines are facing. Leverage on these PRODUCTS as many already have.
5. **POWER:** you have the knowledge, expertise, means to make real change, real impact on society, you each individually have contributions that collectively will make a huge difference to the data challenges that are out there. Use that POWER to contribute and make the difference, use the RDA platform to share these ideas, hold those meetings and advance the work.

The theme chosen for this edition of our plenary meeting was Data for Real-World Impact. I would like to put a spin on that theme for the virtual meeting “RDA for Real-World Impact”. I would like to issue a CALL FOR ACTION to you all, to demonstrate that virtually we can and we will develop solutions that are essential for open science, open data, data management. The support that RDA solutions could give in the health sector in this moment is endless, and we know how urgent this is. This and many other societal challenges are what RDA was set up to support, SHOW the world what you and your colleagues can do to support.

I would like to finish by thanking each of you very, very much for your support and dedication to the RDA community. Please remember that your contributions to identifying solutions to the many data challenges are hugely important and valuable.

Enjoy the virtual 15th Plenary Meeting, which I now declare open.



Hilary Hanahoe
Secretary General
Research Data Alliance