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Small Data, or: Bridging the Gap Between Smart and Dumb Research Repositories

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Scientific research mostly consists of many tiny niches, with many thousands of small data sets: a ‘long tail’ effect. So we have a ‘Small Data’ problem: how do we connect vastly different experimental results, so that they can be used by other scientists? Currently, there are many large, topically agnostic repositories, requiring little metadata or informatics support, which serve an archival need but provide little opportunity for allowing overarching analytics. On the other end of the scale, highly usable topical repositories require painstaking manual curation, which does not scale. This talk will present a proposal on bridging the chasm between these two approaches, to enable systems for interoperable results reporting. After presenting a general overview of some pertinent developments I’ll focus on two use cases, in electrophysiology and geochemistry, where we will attempt to build a system that allows bridging the gap between such ‘big and dumb’ and ‘small and smart’ solutions.

Presenter: Mrs DE WAARD, Anita (Vice President Research Data Collaborations, Elsevier)

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