Data Seal of Approval

an overview
The Data Seal of Approval (DSA)

The Data Seal of Approval was established by a number of institutions committed to the long-term archiving of research data. By assigning the seal, the DSA group seeks to guarantee the durability of the data concerned, but also to promote the goal of durable archiving in general.

The Data Seal of Approval is granted to repositories that are committed to archiving and providing access to scholarly research data in a sustainable way. It is assigned by the DSA Board and renewed every year through a modification procedure.

The Board consists of members from the following institutes: Alfred Wegener Institute (Germany), CINES (France), DANS (The Netherlands), ICPSR (USA), MPI for Psycholinguistics (The Netherlands), NESTOR (Germany) and UK Data Archive (United Kingdom).

Institutions that have achieved the Data Seal of Approval have the right to display the DSA logo on their Web sites, thereby demonstrating the reliability of their archival processes and procedures, without this entailing new thresholds, regulations or high costs.

The DSA Assessment

Achieving the DSA means that the data archive or repository is in compliance with the sixteen DSA guidelines, as determined through an assessment procedure. Although these guidelines pertain to three stakeholders – the data producer (three guidelines), the data consumer (three guidelines) and the data archive (ten guidelines) – the data archive is seen as the primary implementer of the guidelines. The data archive as an organization should assume responsibility for the overall implementation of the DSA in its own specific field.
Procedure

To achieve the Data Seal of Approval, and thereby receive permission to use the DSA logo, the repository must keep a file directory on the Web that is accessible through the front page of the repository. This assessment directory contains:

1. An up-to-date version of the Data Seal of Approval handbook *(data seal of approval.pdf)*
2. The information leaflet about the Data Seal of Approval Assessment *(DSA leaflet.pdf)*
3. The Data Seal of Approval Assessment form *(DSA Assessment form.doc)*.

All the above-mentioned documents can be found on the DSA Web site: www.datasealofapproval.org

The completion of the DSA self-assessment form is the starting point for the reviewing procedure. The assessment is then sent to the Board in order to decide via peer review whether an organization will be granted the Seal of Approval. There is no audit, no certification: just a review on the basis of trust.

The *DSA Assessment form.doc* consists of a guide to facilitate completion of the assessment, the assessment itself and a modification record.

- The assessment lists the sixteen Data Seal of Approval guidelines. In the assessment, the organization describes how these guidelines relate to the repository and how they have been implemented. The assessment reflects the current situation of the repository in a transparent and open manner.
- In the modification record, every modification made to the assessment is recorded. If information changes, the organization informs the DSA Board by email info@datasealofapproval.org
- When approval is granted by the DSA Board, the DSA logo is displayed on the front page of the repository by means of HTML code, which the organization receives from the Board. It contains a link to www.datasealofapproval.org as well as a link to the organization’s repository assessment directory.

The DSA Board places a link pointing to the repository on the Web site datasealofapproval.org, using the logo of the specific repository or the name of the repository in combination with the logo of the hosting organization.

**DSA Board**
http://www.datasealofapproval.org
email: info@datasealofapproval.org
The Data Seal of Approval Guidelines

1. The *data producer* deposits the research data in a data repository with sufficient information for others to assess the scientific and scholarly quality of the research data and compliance with disciplinary and ethical norms.

2. The *data producer* provides the research data in formats recommended by the data repository.

3. The *data producer* provides the research data together with the metadata requested by the data repository.

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.

6. The *data repository* applies documented processes and procedures for managing data storage.

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

8. Archiving takes place according to explicit workflows across the data life cycle.

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

10. The *data repository* enables the users to utilize the research data and refer to them.

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.

14. The *data consumer* must comply 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 higher education and research for the exchange and proper use of knowledge and information.

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