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Why a cost calculator?

In recent years, funding agencies, governments, and international organizations issued a series of research data management and sharing policies, like the H2020[1]. Researchers are encouraged or required to share their production in an open way, including attached publications and data[2].

One consequence of those policies for researchers is the obligation to provide a DMP (Data Management Plan) when applying for funding. The DMP describes the life-cycle of the data during the funded project. As a consequence, many university libraries developed services around research data management to support researchers[3a][3b][4].

Among the many information required in a DMP, some are related to the costs that researchers will face for their data management, storage or curation. Those questions are usually laborious, as the applicant needs to have full knowledge of existing providers for storage, archives or publication services. The service providers can be part of their institution or exist outside.

In this context, the Research Data Management team of EPFL developed an online tool, creating a central place for researchers to easily find and calculate the costs related to their data life-cycle[4].

A tool for researchers

The tool is a single webpage, divided in three parts:

- a dynamic part in which the researcher can calculate the cost
- a resume table that can be exported
- a short manual for using the tool

Service providers are divided into categories (for example Data Repository, Publication, ELN...). If a service provider is not included in the database, the researcher can add it manually.

The researcher can fill the different fields according to his/her needs and calculate the cost for the entire project. The tool includes several options for each service provider to reflect the most accurate cost. The website provides an automatic currency conversion based on the current exchange rate.

When the whole process is complete, the researcher can export a table with all information in the DMP by a simple copy/past from the website.

The tool is also designed to help the researcher to prepare and think about his/her project: all the categories are automatically displayed in order to have a complete view of the data life-cycle. Links to EPFL Library or other relevant websites are available to find further information.

References