Enabling FAIR Data - The Importance of our Scientific Repositories

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The Enabling FAIR Data project is an international, community-driven effort in the Earth, space, and environmental sciences that promotes that the data and software supporting our research is to be deposited in a community-accepted, trusted repository and cited in the paper. Journals will no longer accept data only placed in the supplemental information of the paper. The supplement is not an archive and does not provide the necessary information about the data, nor is there any way to discover the data separate from the paper. Repositories provide the critical infrastructure in our research ecosystem, managing and preserving data and software for future researchers to discovery and use.

As a signatory of the Enabling FAIR Data Commitment Statement repositories agree to comply with the defined tenets. Not all repositories provide the same level of services to researchers or their data holdings. Many researchers find it difficult to select the right repository and understand the process for depositing their data. Through better coordination between journals and repositories journals can guide researchers to the right repository for deposition. This is a significant benefit to authors, but there are unintended challenges that result. Here we will discuss the Enabling FAIR Data project, the successes, and the continued effort necessary to make sure our data is treated as a “world heritage.”