FAIR Data?
Not without
PEOPLE

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Slides

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Meet Barbara

Professor in Coastal Engineering
Approves of Open Science
 Publishes in Open Access journals
Has lots of data, but not really reusable
Barbara feels a bit guilty

Open Science sounds good, but publishing FAIR data does not really help her career and she is not sure what FAIR means in practice.

Not standards or tools in her community she can easily apply.

Wants to be a better example for her PhDs.
Meet Susan

Susan is a clinician who just started a post-doctoral fellowship in a research lab. She wants to use genomic data to study ovarian cancer.
Susan is sort of stuck

She never worked with genomic data before nor did any coding.

Colleagues are busy with their own stuff and she doesn't want to come across as incompetent.

She knows there is lots of training, but the choice is overwhelming.
Meet Dirk

PhD student at TU Delft
Finishing second year
Studying (car) transport flows in
Dutch and Belgian cities
Dirk is worried

Everyone asks him how the writing of the thesis is going. But he needs results before he can write.

And to get results he is highly dependent on the software he uses to simulate traffic.

It’s created by a past group member, and is buggy & poorly documented.

Dirk spends his time figuring stuff out instead of analysing data.
How to help Barbara, Dirk, Susan and other researchers make their data FAIR?
5 key ingredients of research data support
Data Stewards
Meet Kees

Data Steward at Faculty of Civil Engineering and Geosciences
He did his Master and PhD here
He is advising researchers on data management needs
Kees understands Barbara and puts her & her research central

Kees knows faculty research, which helps him understand things better
He likes meeting with researchers and talking about their research
He often suggests small changes to research workflows which make substantial improvements
He helped Barbara and her team get started with version control

Article about Data Stewardship at TU Delft
Data Managers
Meet Jia

Expert data manager
She has a PhD in Bioinformatics
She is employed by the Library but is subcontracted to work with various research groups
Jia works with Susan one day a week

Jia finds Susan’s cancer research really interesting and is helping Susan analyse the data.

She appreciates Susan’s eagerness to learn a bit of programming and version control and flags up useful training for her.

Jia sees this as a rewarding teamwork.

(Disclaimer: Jia is fake. We hope to hire a Jia - or two - soon)
Coding Assistants
Meet Andre

Coding Assistant and an experienced software developer
Enjoys working on concrete problems
Employed by the Library, but now offering coding consultations at faculties
He doesn’t like to be photographed
Andre regularly helps Dirk with small coding issues

Andre is there to help when Dirk gets stuck with his code

Andre knows C++ well, which allows him to structure Dirk’s software a little bit better

Andre also knows various tips and tricks which are handy with debugging and save Dirk a lot of time
4 Data Champions
Meet Siân

PostDoc in Petroleum Engineering and a Data Champion
She’s been doing research in various places all over the world and is tired of poor data management practices
She wants to go paperless and is piloting Electronic Lab Notebooks at her department
Meet Siân

She volunteers her free time to be part of researcher-led, bottom-up community of Data Champions

Data champions not only teach and support each other, but also inspire other researchers who haven’t yet heard about Open Science or FAIR data
People who believe in people
Meet Alastair

Head of Research Data Services at TU Delft and Head of 4TU.Research Data

He has research background in the Humanities and he brings human-centric approach to Delft University of Technology

He has a big team to manage, but he always smiles

(Disclaimer: Alastair is my boss and he didn’t see these slides)
Alastair believes and invests in people

Alastair thinks that we should not focus too much on “do we have the right infrastructure” but on “do we have the right people?”

He trusts people, encourages them and appreciates them for their contributions
Alastair keeps the wheels turning

Figure by Esther Plomp
Summary – 5 key ingredients of research data support

1. Data Stewards (PEOPLE)
2. Data Managers (PEOPLE)
3. Coding Assistants (PEOPLE)
4. Data Champions (PEOPLE)
5. PEOPLE who believe in PEOPLE (and keep the wheels turning)
Cultural obstacles to research data management and sharing at TU Delft

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