

8-23-2017

Research Data Confidentiality and Ethics Policy

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Recommended Citation

Weaver, James Roger, "Research Data Confidentiality and Ethics Policy" (2017). *Scholars' Mine - Policies, Procedures and Guidelines*. 9.
http://scholarsmine.mst.edu/scpro_guidelines/9



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Research Data – Confidentiality and Ethics Policy

Purpose

The protection of research subjects and the adherence to ethical norms are critical to responsible science. This policy outlines the actions and practices employed by Curtis Laws Wilson Library (Library) to minimize disclosure risks, and to maintain the trust of those agreeing to have personal/sensitive data stored in the institutional repository (Scholars' Mine).

This policy is subject to change as capabilities, standards, laws, policies, best practices and technology impact the Library's ability to preserve and make accessible digital resources. The intended audience for this policy includes:

- faculty, administrators, and students of Missouri S&T,
- researchers external to Missouri S&T who are collaborating with Missouri S&T personnel and who want to make use of Scholars' Mine services,
- funders, and
- users.

The objective of this policy is ensure that research data houses in Scholars' Mine conforms to institutional policies and laws regarding the confidentiality and ethical practices in research.

Mandate

As an institution of higher learning Missouri S&T supports scholarship, teaching, and learning. The Library is responsible for identifying, acquiring, and preserving digital resources for as long as needed to support the activities of the University. The digital repository's (Scholars' Mine) mandate for the preservation of these resources drawn from responsibilities outlined above and specifically defined in:

- Lever 2.4.13 of Missouri S&T's strategic plan which states: "Continue development of Scholars' Mine designed for increasing internal and external communication and globally promoting the intellectual work of the campus."
- Lever 5 of the Library strategic plan which states: "Explore opportunities to feature and develop Scholars Mine."

The Library is committed to ensuring confidentiality and ethical practices associated the research data in Scholars' Mine.

Scope

The policy extends to all researchers submitting their research data to Scholars' Mine.

Policy

It is the responsibility of the researcher to conduct their research in compliance to any applicable disciplinary norms and be in compliance with the University of Missouri Collected Rules and Regulations (see: https://www.umssystem.edu/ums/rules/collected_rules/research). Researchers submitting data to Scholars' Mine are required to acknowledge that they are in compliance and to provide an assessment of any disclosure risk.

Scholars' Mine operates in compliance with the laws of the United States and the state of Missouri which address confidentiality, privacy and protection of research participants. Relevant federal laws include:

Curtis Laws Wilson Library
Missouri University of Science and Technology

- Protection of Human Subject (45 CFR 46)
- The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

Scholars' Mine requires that researcher submitting research data to provide copies of all relevant documentation proving compliance with these laws.

Depositors of research data are also required to provide a disclosure risk assessment which is evaluated by trained library staff prior to acceptance. Data with a high disclosure risk may be rejected and returned to the researcher with advice on how to lower the risk. Also, access to data with high disclosure risks may be secured through access control measures. Scholars' Mine offers four levels of access to data:

1. open-access
2. access restricted to defined IP addresses or domains
3. access restricted to specific users requiring login authentication
4. on-site access only under secure conditions.

Appropriate access levels are assigned to accepted data sets in consultation with the depositor.

Policy Review

This policy and the actions and activities associated with it will be evaluated regularly to ensure that implemented strategies continue to support the Library's mission and policies, use resources in a cost-effective manner, and adapt appropriately to address evolving law and technologies. This evaluation will be completed at least once every three years.