

Repository Staff Attitudes about the Value of Trustworthy Digital Repository Certification

Rebecca D. Frank, PhD
Assistant Professor
School of Information Sciences
Einstein Center Digital Future
rfrank7@utk.edu



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

SAA Research Forum 2023



I conduct research in the areas of digital preservation, digital curation, and data reuse (including open data), focusing on social and ethical barriers that limit or prevent the preservation, sharing, and reuse of digital information.

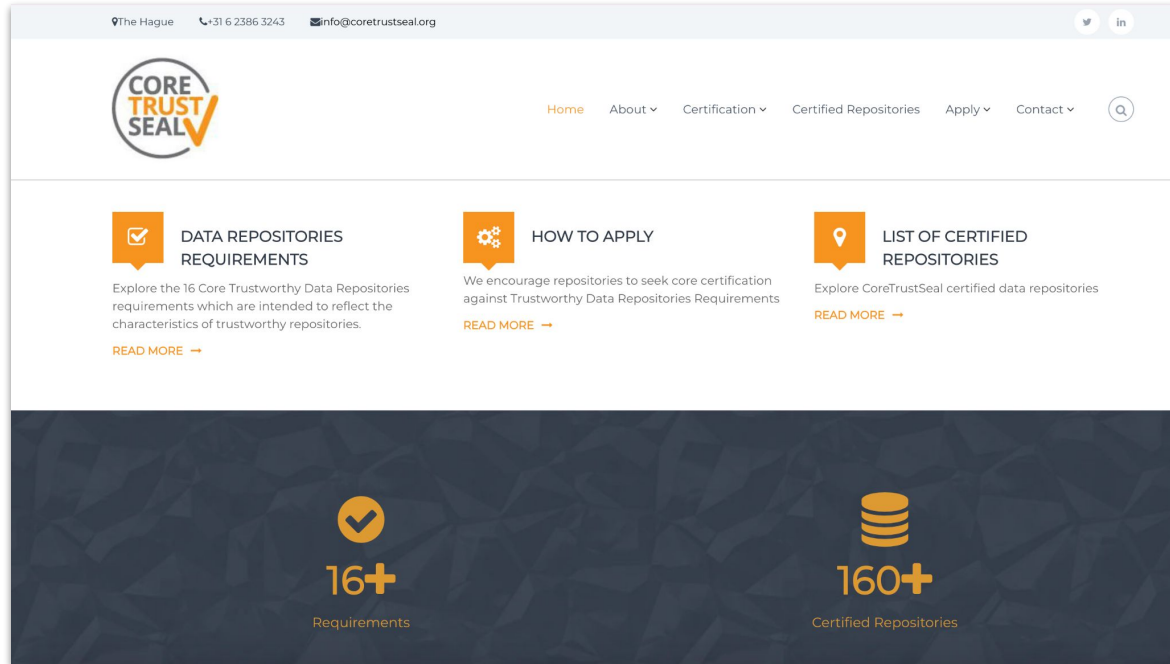
@frankrd

@rfrank@digipres.club

Overview

- Background: CoreTrustSeal
- Research Questions
- Research Methods: Survey
- Analysis Framework
- Preliminary Findings
- Discussion & Conclusion: Next Steps
- Future Research

Background: CoreTrustSeal (CTS)



Research Questions

Do staff members from CTS certified repositories find value in the certification?

If yes, how do they characterize the value of CTS certification?

If no, how do they describe and/or explain their views?

Research Methods: Survey of CTS Members



- 171 repositories surveyed
- Response rate: 53.98%
- 86 responses to the question presented here (response rate: 50.29%)

“In your opinion, what is
the primary value of
trustworthy repository
certification?”

Research Methods: Qualitative Analysis



Analytical Framework: Benefits of TDR Certification (TRAC/ISO 16363)

Internal Benefits	accountability
	documentation
	shared understanding
External Benefits	stakeholder communication
	transparency
	competitive advantage
	leadership/early adoption
Ambivalence	general ambivalence
Lack of Benefits	costs outweigh benefits
	TDR certification not meaningful
	problem with implementation

Frank, R. D. (*accepted*). Repository Staff Perspectives on the Benefits of Trustworthy Digital Repository Certification. In iPres 2023: Proceedings of the 20th International Conference on Digital Preservation.

Preliminary Findings

Analytical Framework: Updates

		New Codes Added
External Benefits	stakeholder communication	alignment with best practices
	transparency	common language for colleagues
	competitive advantage	encourage data sharing
	leadership/early adoption	communication with funders
		establish expectations of quality across the digital preservation community
		enhance repository reputation
		demonstrate trustworthiness to users

External Benefit: Communication to Stakeholders

“It is important to get a certification that **demonstrates** that a repository operates following best practices and standards that have been endorsed by a global community. This way, **stakeholders can make an informed decision** if a repository meets their expectations.”

External Benefit: Demonstrate Trustworthiness to Users

“Informing the user community of long term preservation, and active data stewardship to **build trust and confidence** in its data and services.”

External Benefit: Communication with Funders

“Demonstrate to funders the repository's ability to perform the mandated activity.”

External Benefit: Alignment with Best Practices

“The primary value is that it helps us to evaluate our repository and the associated governance, processes, documentation, infrastructure, and to make them more trustworthy by providing benchmarks and guidance.”

Analytical Framework: Updates

		New Codes Added
Internal Benefits	accountability	improve repository processes
	documentation	risk mitigation
	shared understanding	create opportunities

Internal Benefit: Additional Accountability

“independent assessment and verification, to a standard that has been drawn up by a broad section of the archiving community”

Internal Benefit: Create Documentation

“Forcing the repository to document its services/work through written procedures.”

Internal Benefit: Improve Processes

“In our case, this meant describing the archiving processes and determining the responsibility for the individual components of the archiving process. In retrospect, this meant improving our activities and workflow in the archive. We have also identified gaps that need to be improved for the goal of long-term data archiving.”

Analytical Framework: Updates



Verify Preservation	
Internal Benefits	accountability
	documentation
	shared understanding
External Benefits	stakeholder communication
	transparency
	competitive advantage
	leadership/early adoption
Ambivalence	general ambivalence
Lack of Benefits	costs outweigh benefits
	TDR certification not meaningful
	problem with implementation

Verify Preservation

“It provides security that the deposited resources will be preserved and be available.”

Research Questions

- Respondents found value in CTS certification.
- They described this value in terms of internal and external benefits that generally characterized certification as:
 - verification that the digital information in their repository would be preserved
 - providing an incentive to improve their repository
 - serving as a means to communicate with external stakeholders

Limitations

- Phrasing of the question focused respondents on describing a value rather than asking *if* they found value in CTS certification.
- Repositories with recent and/or current certifications were unlikely to describe certification as lacking value.
- Survey was distributed with the aid of the CTS Board.

Next Steps

- Further analysis of survey results.
- Analysis of qualitative interviews.
- Second wave of survey for longitudinal analysis & additional interviews.

Future Research:

Seeking repositories conducting informal self-audits using the TRAC, ISO 16363, CoreTrustSeal, or nestor checklists.

Interested in participating?
Contact me at: rfrank7@utk.edu

For more information about my research:
<https://rebeccadfrank.com/>

Related Publications

- Frank, R. D. & Wylie, J. (*accepted*). Audit Team Communication and Risk in Trustworthy Digital Repository Certification. In Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T).
- Frank, R. D. (*accepted*). Repository Staff Perspectives on the Benefits of Trustworthy Digital Repository Certification. In iPres 2023: Proceedings of the 20th International Conference on Digital Preservation.
- Frank, R. D., & Rothfritz, L. (2022). Designated Community: Uncertainty and Risk. *Journal of Documentation*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-07-2022-0161>
Open Access: https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_infosciepubs/467/
- Frank, R. D. (2022). Risk in Trustworthy Digital Repository Audit and Certification. *Archival Science*, 22(1), 43-73.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-021-09366-z> Open Access: <https://rdcu.be/cyLa6>
- Frank, R. D. (2020). The Social Construction of Risk in Digital Preservation. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*. 71: 474-484. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24247> Open Access: <http://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/149147>
- Frank, R. D. & Yakel, E. (2013). Disaster Planning for Digital Repositories. *Proceedings of the Association for Information Science & Technology*, 50:1-10. DOI <https://doi.org/10.1002/meet.14505001058> Open Access: <http://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/106841>

Acknowledgements



Thank you to the **CoreTrustSeal Board** for assistance distributing this survey.



This research was funded in part by the **Einstein Center Digital Future**.

Repository Staff Attitudes about the Value of Trustworthy Digital Repository Certification

Rebecca D. Frank, PhD

Assistant Professor

School of Information Sciences

Einstein Center Digital Future

rfrank7@utk.edu



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE