

TRE's sound great, but how do they REALLY work?

James Scott, Senior User Support and
Training Officer, UK Data Service

John Sanderson, Data Access Services
Manager, UK Data Service



Overview

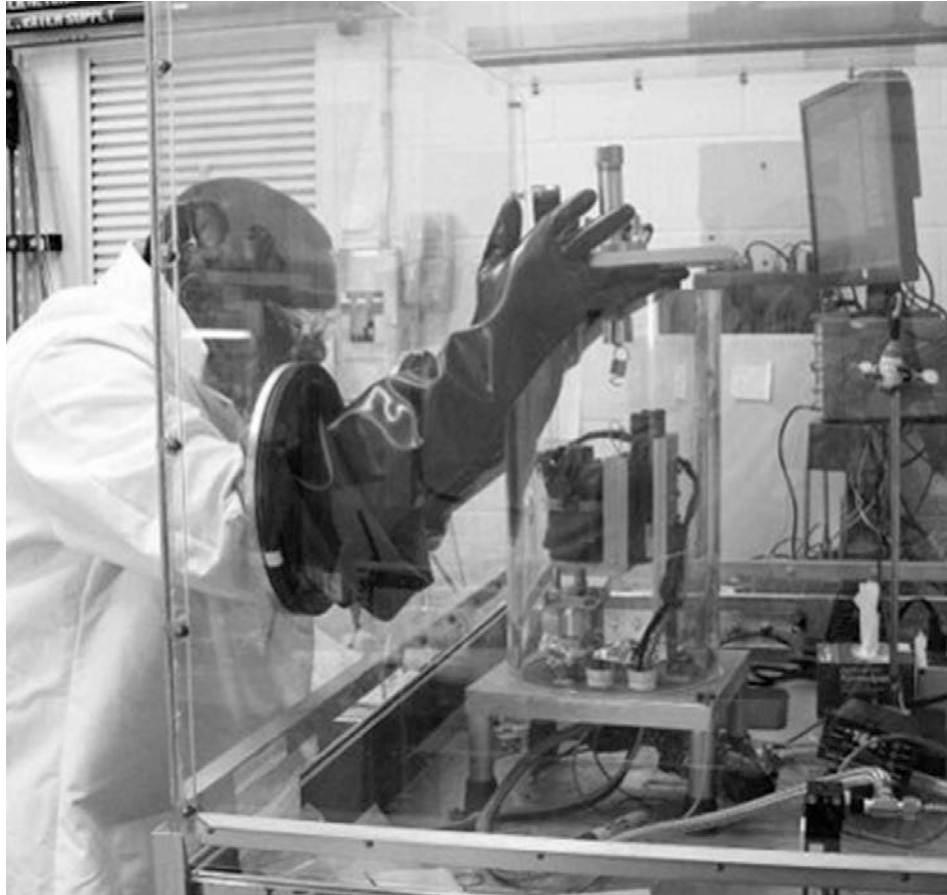
- About UKDS SecureLab.
- What our User Support Team does.
- Common demands and how we've responded to them.
- Where we stop.
- We couldn't have done this without.
- Any questions at the end.

UK Data Service

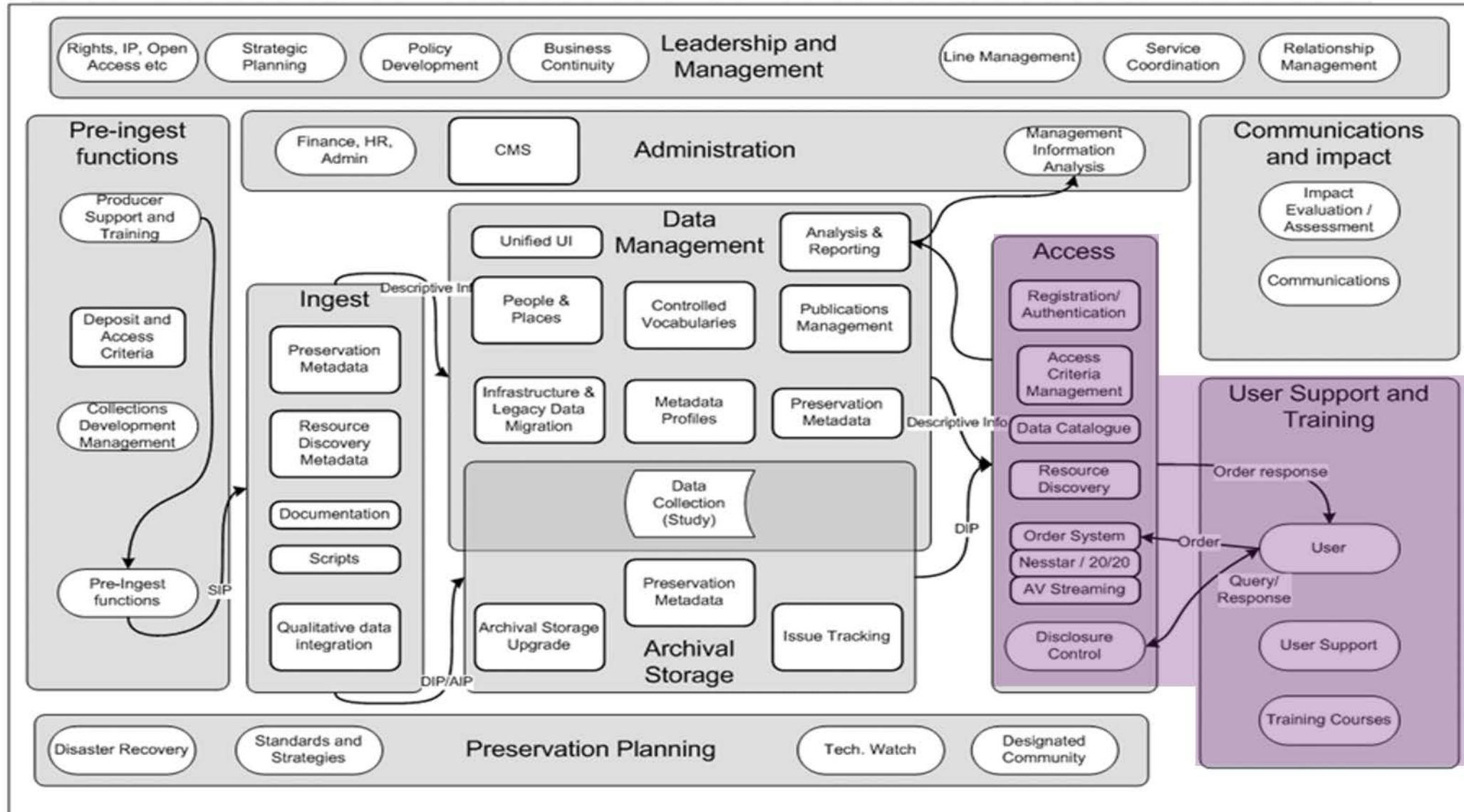
- UKDS is the UK's only nationally funded research infrastructure for curating and providing access to social science data.
- We've been enabling the use of social science data since 1967.
- We've run the UKDS SecureLab as our Trusted Research Environment solution since 2011, to enable safe access to our most sensitive data.

UKDS SecureLab

- Disseminating access, not data.
- Various access controls, based on the 5 Safes Framework.
- UKDS controls the space the researcher works within.



TREs in the OAIS model



Managing researchers through the project lifecycle

- Where do **our** UST staff get involved?
- Some pre-data access checks.
- Provide support once UKDS SecureLab access has been granted.



Pre-data access

User Support Team involvement prior to access being granted:

- Preliminary application ethics/validity checks.
- Safe Researcher Training (SRT)*.

**UKDS first to edit this and roll it out for online delivery at start of Covid-19.*

Human Researchers

- Researchers are human(!) and may not recall everything they've been taught about UKDS SecureLab.
- Leads to greater resources needing to be allocated to outputs, imports etc. than is ideal!
- We provide users with a number of resources to help guide them through the different processes.



Researcher resources (1)

- UKDS SecureLab User Guide.
- SDC Handbook (SDAP).
- How to log in to UKDS SecureLab video.
- Output Request web form - minimum requirements.
- User Support Team available to answer queries.



Researcher resources (2)

- When researchers make frequent output errors or “don’t get it”.
- Moodle online Refresher course/quiz.
- Bitesize videos
 - [10 most common SecureLab output request issues.](#)
 - [How to use SecureLab efficiently.](#)
- Webinars (recorded for re-watch)
 - [All you need to know about UKDS SecureLab import requests.](#)

Where do we stop?

- Critique methodology description (for applications) but don't provide methodological advice.
- As above for ethics...
- Software support ('support' not 'do'), we publish a list of available/help install but don't train on use.
- We try to resolve data queries; but don't advise on data what to use / what analysis to carry out.
- We're not prescriptive re SDC-related changes to outputs.
- "Whatever you offer, researchers will need more from you...."

We couldn't have done it without



Safe Data Access Professionals

- <https://securedatagroup.org/>

International Secure Data Facility Professionals Network

<https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/about/research-and-development/international-secure-data-facility-professionals-network-isdfpn/>

Final thought(s)

- Running a TRE is all about supporting people.
- They're human and will make mistakes.
- Think about what you provide proactively, resources you can point them to.
- Expect the unexpected (don't underestimate researchers capacity to surprise you, they'll come up with new queries).
- Don't think the technology will do all the work for you.
- Stand on the shoulders of giants (beg, borrow and steal from those who have gone before you).

Any questions?





Thank you.

James Scott: jscott@essex.ac.uk

John Sanderson: jpsand@essex.ac.uk

