

How the Law Supports Existing Models of Environmental Data Reuse: The ‘Marine Environmental Data and Information Network’ (MEDIN) Case Study

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The 'Marine Environmental Data and Information Network' (MEDIN)

“The MEDIN portal is a metadata discovery service providing users with a single point of access to a well-balanced, authoritative marine metadata catalogue. [...] Metadata records are available for UK marine data sets across all subject areas and disciplines.”

'Search the MEDIN Data Archive Centres', MEDIN website <<http://portal.oceannet.org/search/full>> [accessed 20 February 2013].

<http://portal.oceannet.org/>

Portsmouth, Hampshire, UK

MEDIN: BACKGROUND

- Founded in 2008;
- UK government mechanism;
- Community involvement: sponsors, partners, thematic data archive centres;
- Multi-data, multi-user and multi-organisational; and,
- ‘Collect once and use many times!’

Semi-Structured Interview Participants

Mr B. – Core team member, MEDIN.

Mr W. – Data Scientist, British Oceanographic Data Centre.

Ms E. – Data Manager and Marine Biodiversity Scientist, Data Archive for Seabed Species and Habitats.

Dr S. – Physical Oceanography Academic, National Oceanography Centre, University of Southampton.

Mrs T. – Intellectual Property and Licensing Officer, UK Hydrographic Office.

Mr N. – External Relations, UK Hydrographic Office.



Brighton, Sussex, UK

Six interview participants – **Mr B., Mr W., Ms E., Dr S., Mrs T. and Mr N.** - were interviewed during February 2012. The interviews lasted between 00:32:18 to 00:46:19. They were approved by the University of Southampton 'Management Ethics Committee'.

It must be noted that all views are the participants' own; they may not represent the views of MEDIN, BODC, DASSH, the Hydrographic Office and/or the University of Southampton. Any inferences drawn from these interviews belong to the author [Laura German] and may not necessarily be held by participants or their respective organisations.

INSPIRE I: Mandating Reuse

“They [the standards from MEDIN and the INSPIRE directive] have really helped us to interact with European partners – we have been able to do collaborative projects with European partners based on these standards that have been developed, but it has also helped us within the Marine Biological Association to put a baseline level of data management in place based on these standards and guidelines.”

INSPIRE II: Mandating Reuse

- **Not about open access, but determines metadata standards;**
- **Uncertainty over what data are subject to INSPIRE; and,**
- **The cost of INSPIRE compliance.**



Copyright and Licensing I

“We are not pushing out our own data – it’s all third party data that we hold within DASSH. Data that comes into DASSH – we don’t take ownership of, we’re custodians of it. They [data owners] sign our terms and conditions, and there is differing levels which they provide data.”

Brighton, Sussex, UK

Copyright and Licensing II

“We did at one stage consider requiring users to register – and the main purpose for that originally was so that we would be able to potentially police misuse of data. Having gone to the ‘open government licence’ - where there isn’t really the concept of misuse of data – we dropped the idea of registration. Registration carries with it significant rules and regulations, because of data protection and privacy – which in itself results in a significant additional cost for the infrastructure and setting up the DAC [data archive centre].”

“I think it is quite confusing – yes. And the *sui generis* [database] right is not that difficult to explain, but it’s not well known. It’s relatively recent. There isn’t an international convention, as there is for copyright and patents and so on. So it doesn’t exist in some countries, does exist in others – and does exist in the EU because it comes from the EU directive. But it’s not widely known – there’s very little case law – and most of case law is around football fixtures and horse racing – as you’re probably aware.”

Copyright and Licensing III

Copyright and Licensing IV

“It [acknowledgement] is important. I don’t know if people think of it in legal terms. I think people will think of it in respect terms. I think we respect the amount of time it [...]

I think it’s a culture of mutual respect and acknowledgement, because when you’re a scientist – your productivity in terms of your output of datasets and publications is really important and we’re all in exactly the same position – so I think we all respect that.”

Conclusion: How does the Law Support Existing Models of Environmental Data Reuse?

INSPIRE

Top down approach;
Minimum agreed metadata standards;
Cost and support.

MEDIN

An important existing model
of marine environmental data
reuse

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Copyright and Licensing

Clear, written permission
of reuse;
Some confusion;
Registration?

**Many thanks to MEDIN and all the interview
participants who made this research possible**