https://dspace.org/

Positioning Data Ethics within the Wits Graduate Online Learning and Development (GOLD) RDM Strategy at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

Matizirofa, Lazarus Gallant; Selematsela, Daisy

2025-09
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/46511
Matizirofa, L.G. & Selematsela, D. (2025). Positioning Data Ethics within the Wits Graduate Online Learning and Development (GOLD) RDM Strategy at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. [Presentation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg]. WIReDSpace. https://hdl.handle.net/10539/46511

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Positioning Data Ethics within the Wits Graduate Online Learning and Development (GOLD) RDM Strategy at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

Lazarus Matizirofa & Dr. Daisy Selematsela

DATA SOVEREIGNTY AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY PROTECTION

GLOBAL DATA ETHICS AND GOVERNANCE SYMPOSIUM
18-19 SEPTEMBER 2025
The Riverside Hotel, Durban, SOUTH AFRICA



Overview

- Introduction
- Importance of Research Ethics
- Research Data Management (RDM) Principles
- Role of Postgraduate Students
- Challenges and Opportunities
- Recommendations
- Q&A

Introduction

The research landscape is evolving with increasing emphasis on:

- Interdisciplinary or Transdisciplinary research
- Ethical integrity
- Responsible data handling
- Reproducibility and transparency (FAIR & CARE Principles)

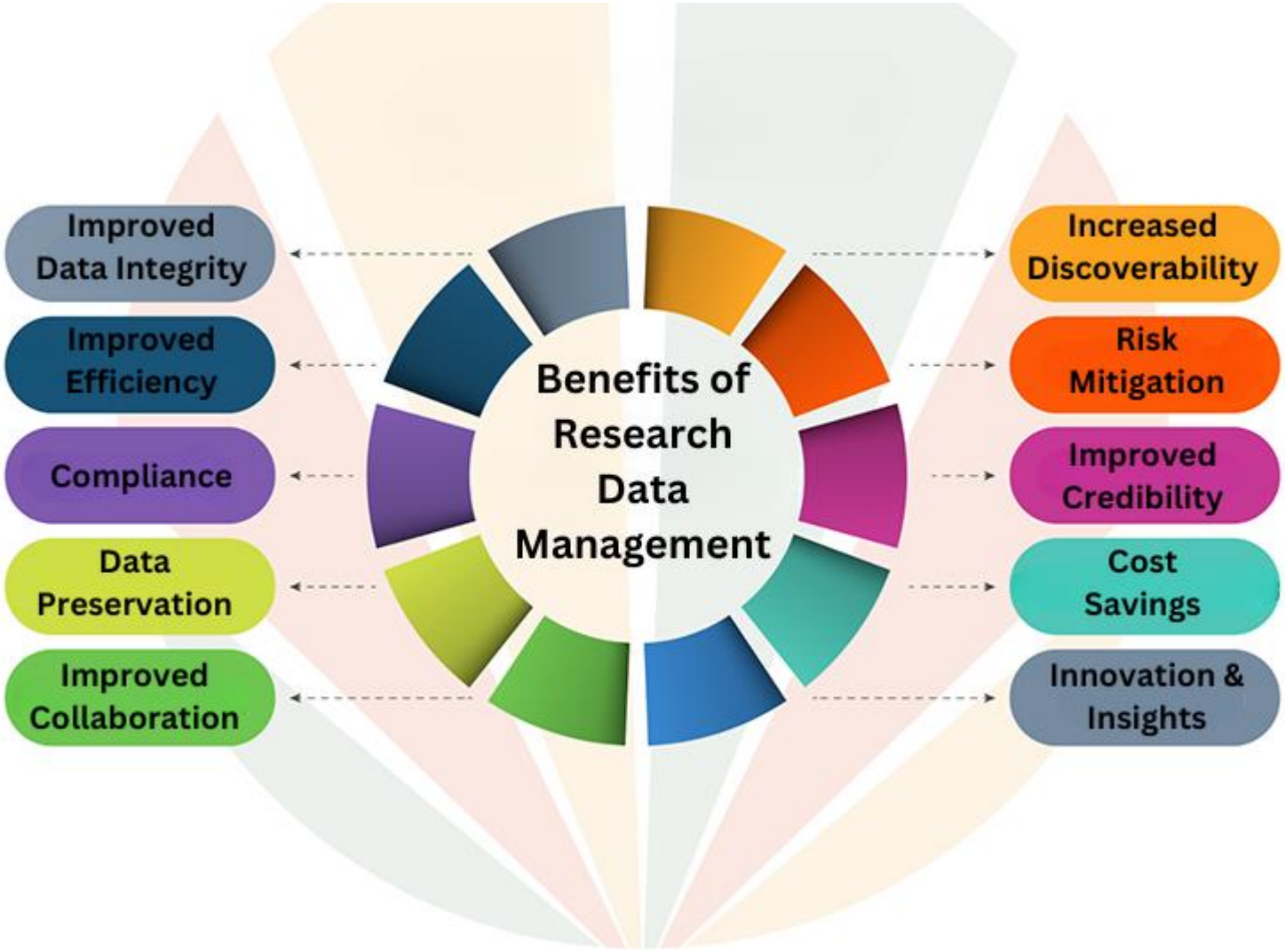
Postgraduate students are at the forefront of this transformation

Postgraduate Figures - 2025

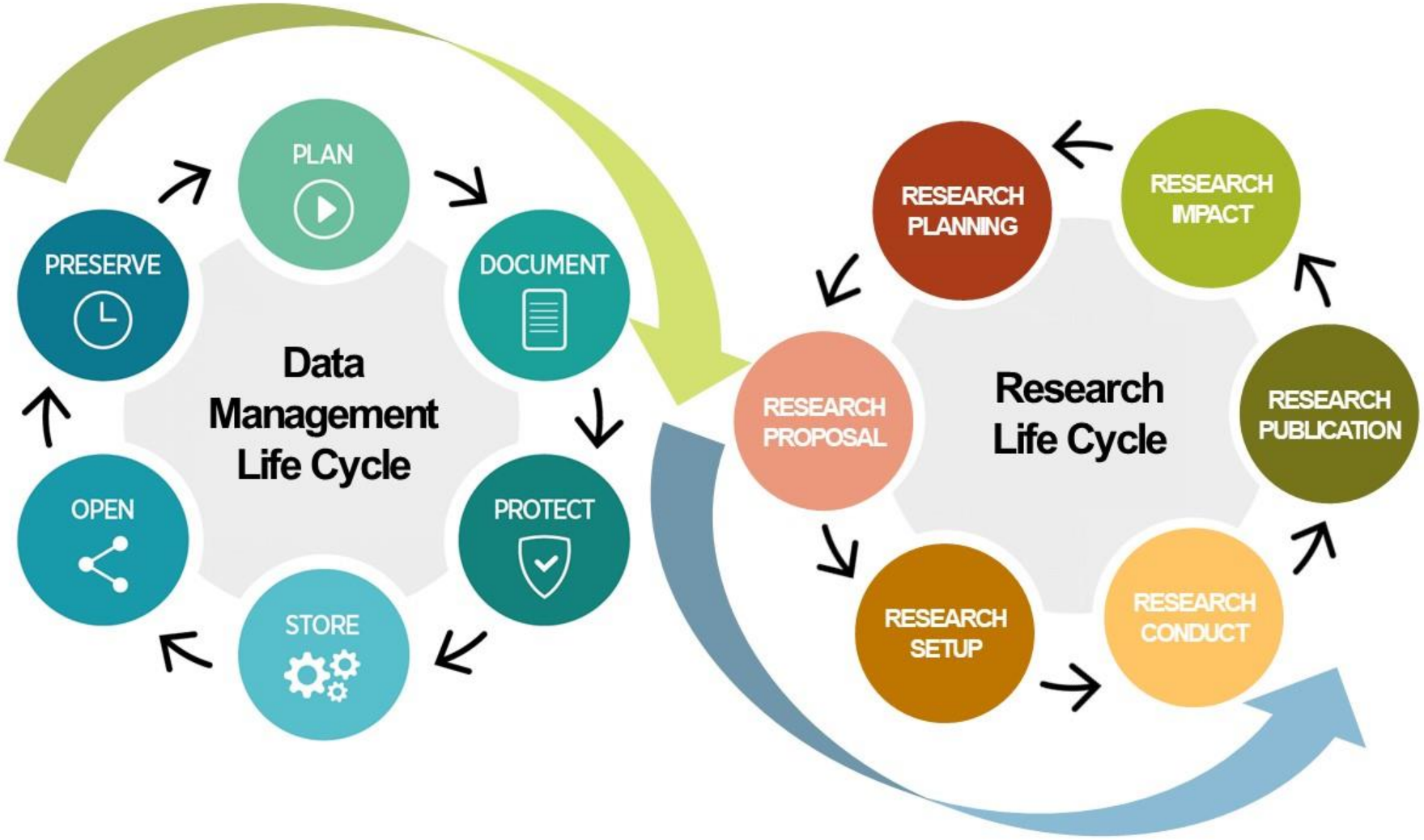
Faculty	No. of PGs
Humanities	3394
Science	2045
EBE	2522
Health Science	3116
Commerce, Law & Management	6326

4000 of 17000 postgraduate students are registered on the GOLD platform

Challenges in Research Data Management Services



RDM Services & Faculty Libraries Integrated Training



What is Research Ethics?

A set of principles guiding responsible conduct in research

Key principles:

- ❑ Integrity
- ❑ Respect for persons
- ❑ Beneficence
- ❑ Justice

Ethical clearance and informed consent are essential

Why Research Ethics Matters

- Protects participants and researchers
- Ensures credibility and trust in research
- Prevents misconduct (e.g., plagiarism, data fabrication)
- Aligns with institutional and national policies

Ethical use of AI tools – Scopus AI, Science Direct AI, Trinka/ Documark Research Assistant, Writeful



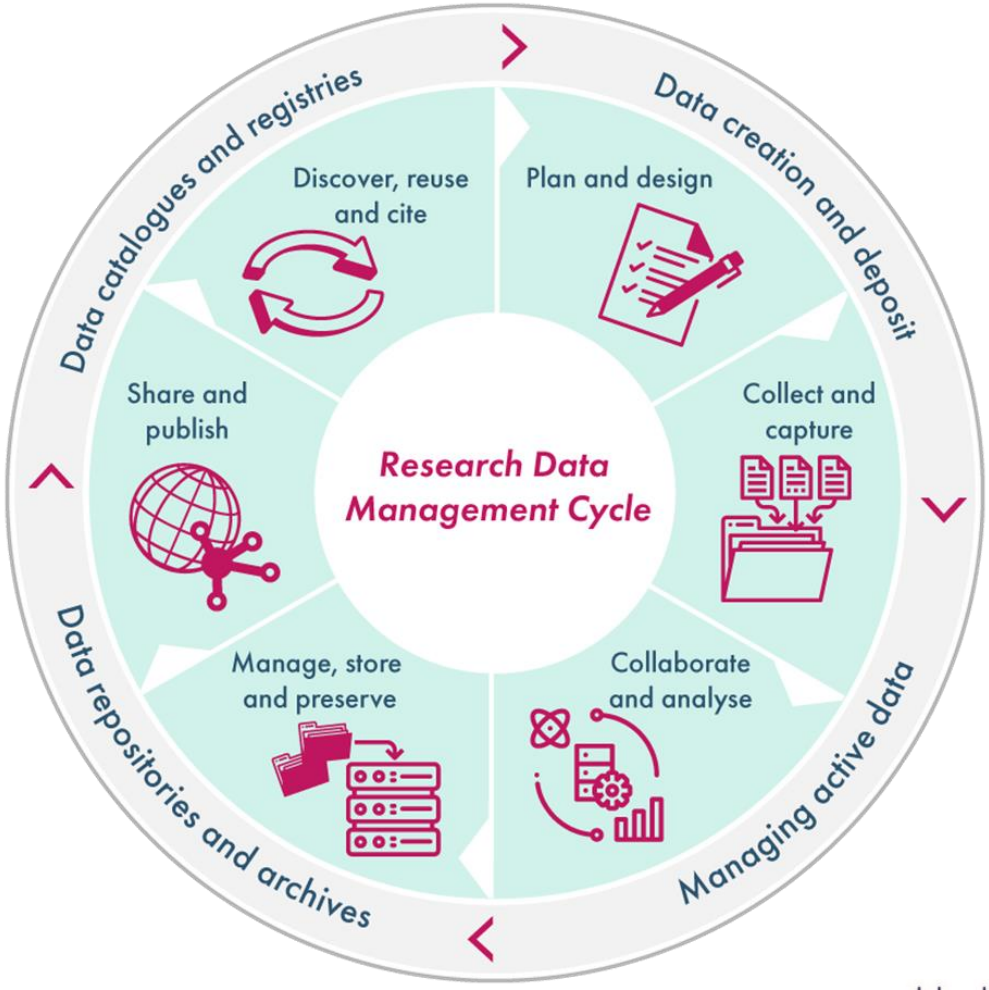




Introduction to Research Data Management (RDM)

RDM is the organization, storage, preservation, and sharing of data collected during the research Lifecycle approach:

1. Planning
2. Collecting
3. Processing
4. Analysing
5. Preserving
6. Sharing

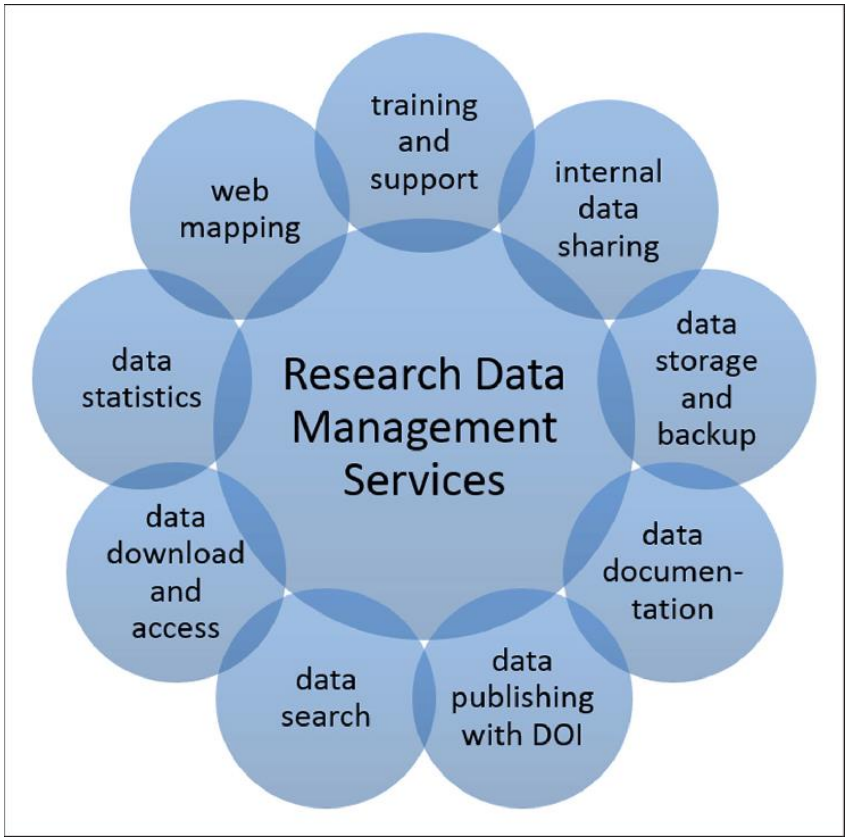


How do we support Postgraduate Students in Building a Responsible Research Culture - Research Ethics & Research Data Management?



Why RDM is Important

- Enhances research integrity and reproducibility
- Facilitates data sharing and collaboration
- Meets funder and institutional requirements
- Protects sensitive and personal data



Research data management services provided for CRC/TR32 members, modified from Curdt & Hoffmeister (2015).

RDM and Ethics – The Intersection

Ethical data handling includes:

- Anonymization
- Secure storage
- Consent for data reuse

Data management plans (DMPs) as ethical tools



The figure provides an overview of the structure of a DMP and which elements it typically contains

Postgraduate Students – Key Stakeholders

Often, first-time researchers need structured training in:

- ❑ Research ethics
- ❑ Data management
- ❑ Responsible authorship

Supervision and mentorship are critical – RDM Research Cycle and development of Data Management Plans (DMPs) are ethical tools required to enhance productivity!

Challenges Faced by Postgraduates

- Limited awareness of ethical and RDM requirements
- Pressure to publish
- Inadequate institutional support
- Navigating complex data policies

1. Data Collection and Documentation	2. Ethics, legal and security Issues	3. Data Storage and Preservation	4. Data Sharing and reuse
What kind of data are generated	How will ethical issues be handled	How are the data stored?	How and where will the data be shared?
How will data be generated	How are the data accessed	Are there back up systems	How are sensitive data protected
What metadata are needed	Are there copyright issues	How are data safely preserved	How can data be accessed
	Are there sensitive data		
	What about intellectual property rights		

Opportunities for Growth

- Integrating ethics and RDM into postgraduate curricula
- Institutional support through libraries and research offices
- Use of open science platforms and tools
- Peer learning and communities of practice



https://www.uni-wuerzburg.de/en/rdm/

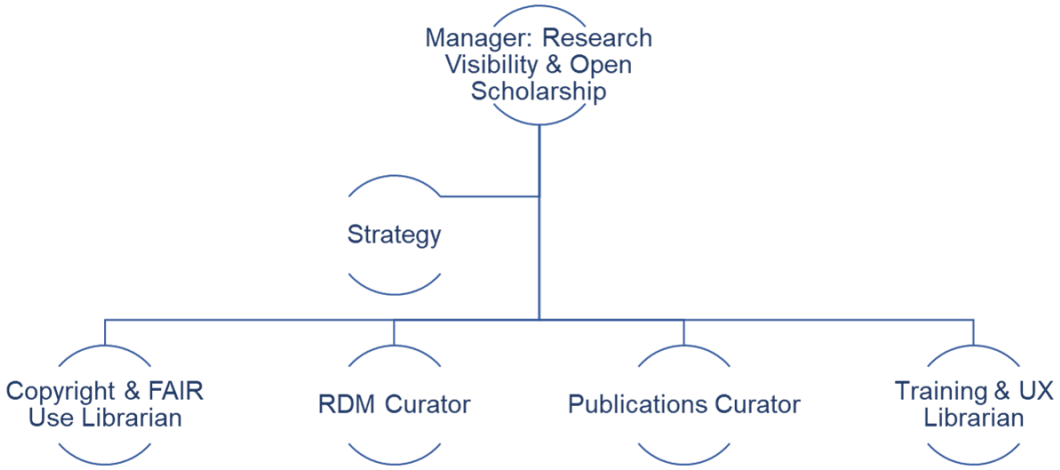
Recommendations

- Develop clear institutional policies and training programs
- Encourage early development of DMPs
- Foster a culture of ethical awareness and data stewardship
- Provide mentorship and support networks



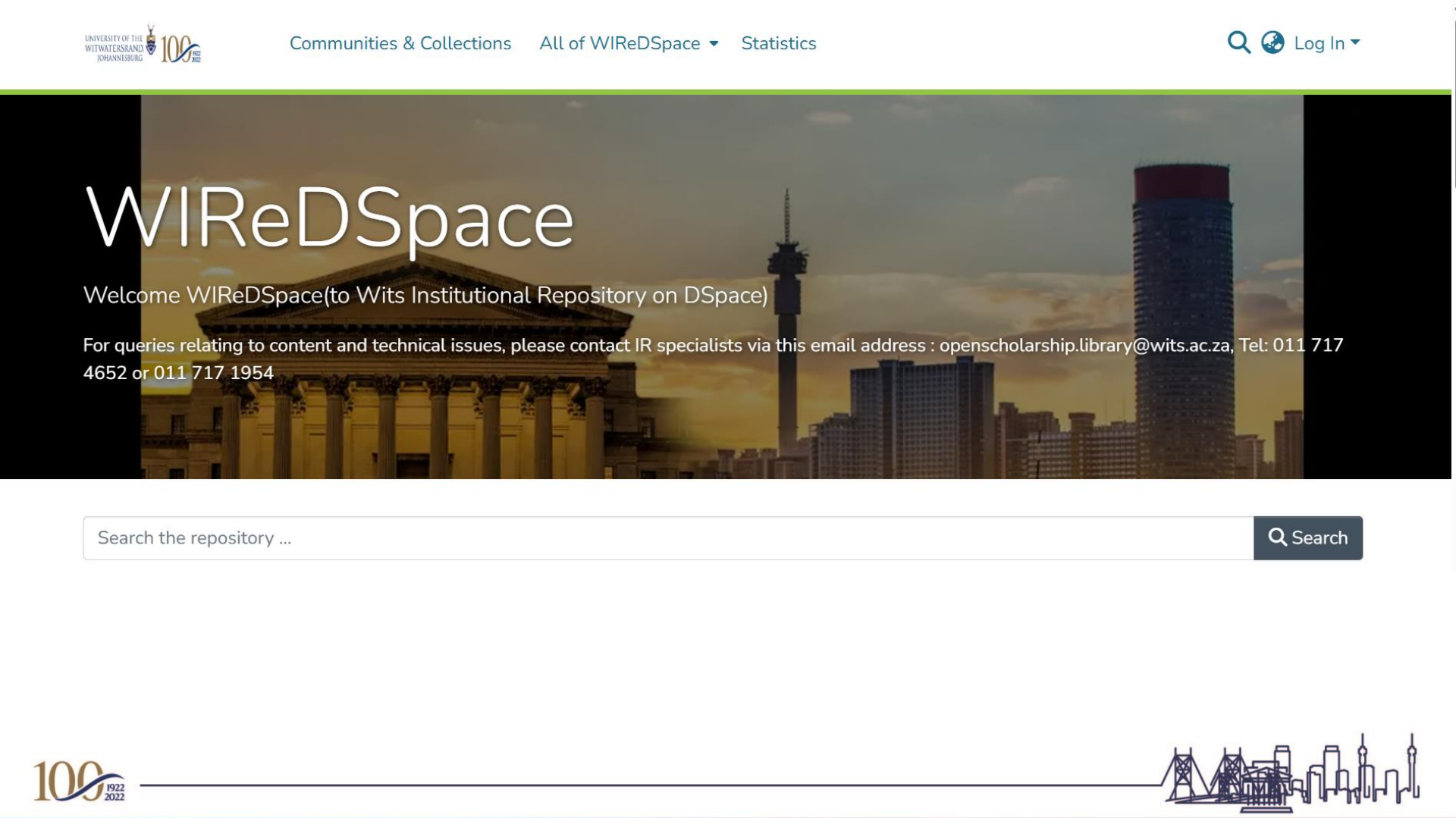
Conclusion

- Ethics and RDM are foundational to responsible research
- Postgraduate students must be empowered with knowledge and tools
- Institutions play a key role in shaping ethical research cultures





Linking research publications and curated research datasets in the two Wits Research Repositories



Datasets are citable and are the New GOLD



Wits Data Vault Repository – to be launched during the IDW 2025

Wits Libraries' RDM Services & Platforms



DSPACE



Altmetric
EXPLORER



Dimensions
A **Digital Science** Solution



figshare

Retrospective Research Outputs to be curated

PUBLICATIONS	DATASETS	GRANTS	PATENTS	CLINICAL TRIALS	P
75,319	**57,120**	20,749	734	362	0

University of the Witwatersrand

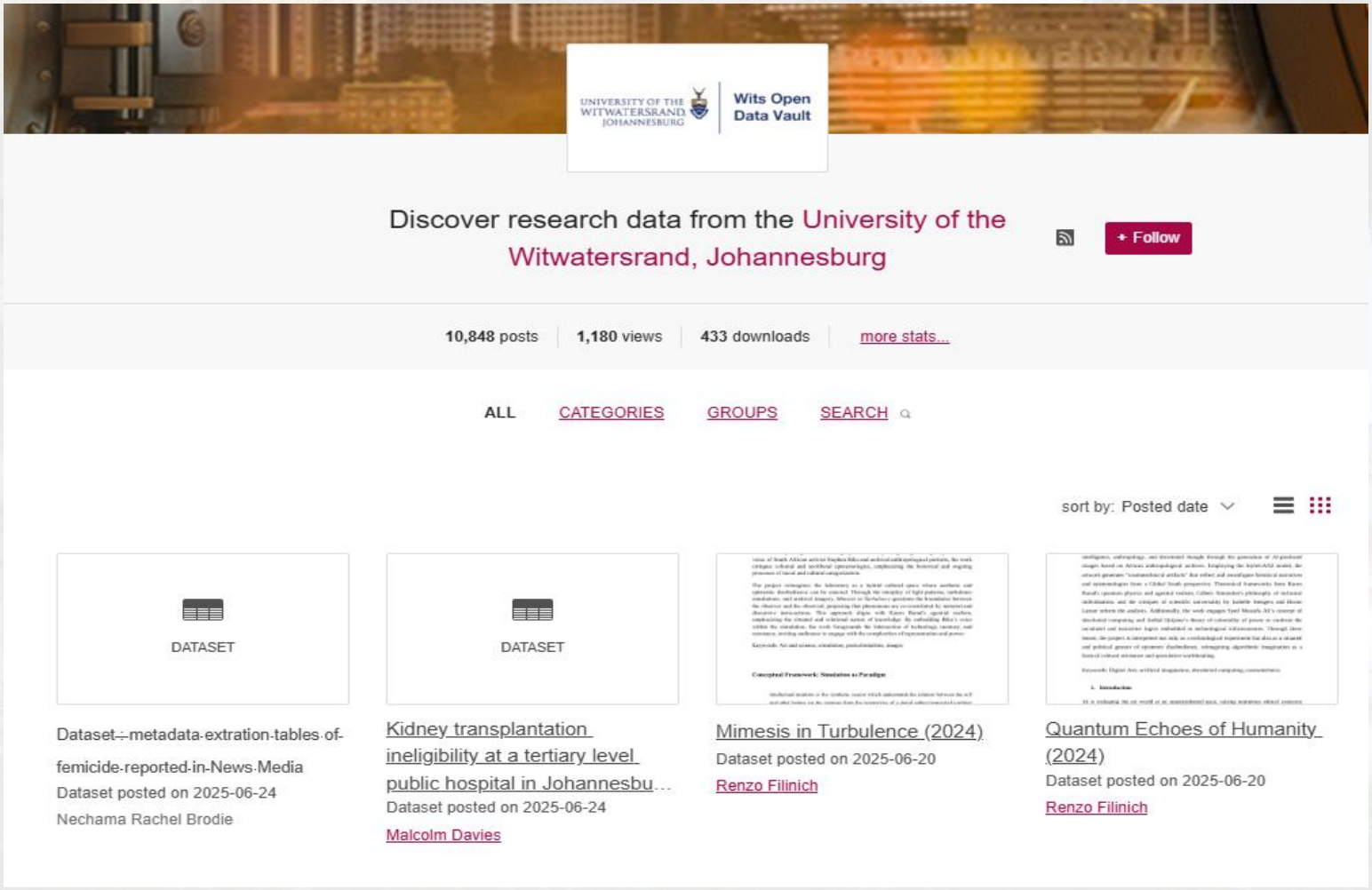
Johannesburg, South Africa

View Details

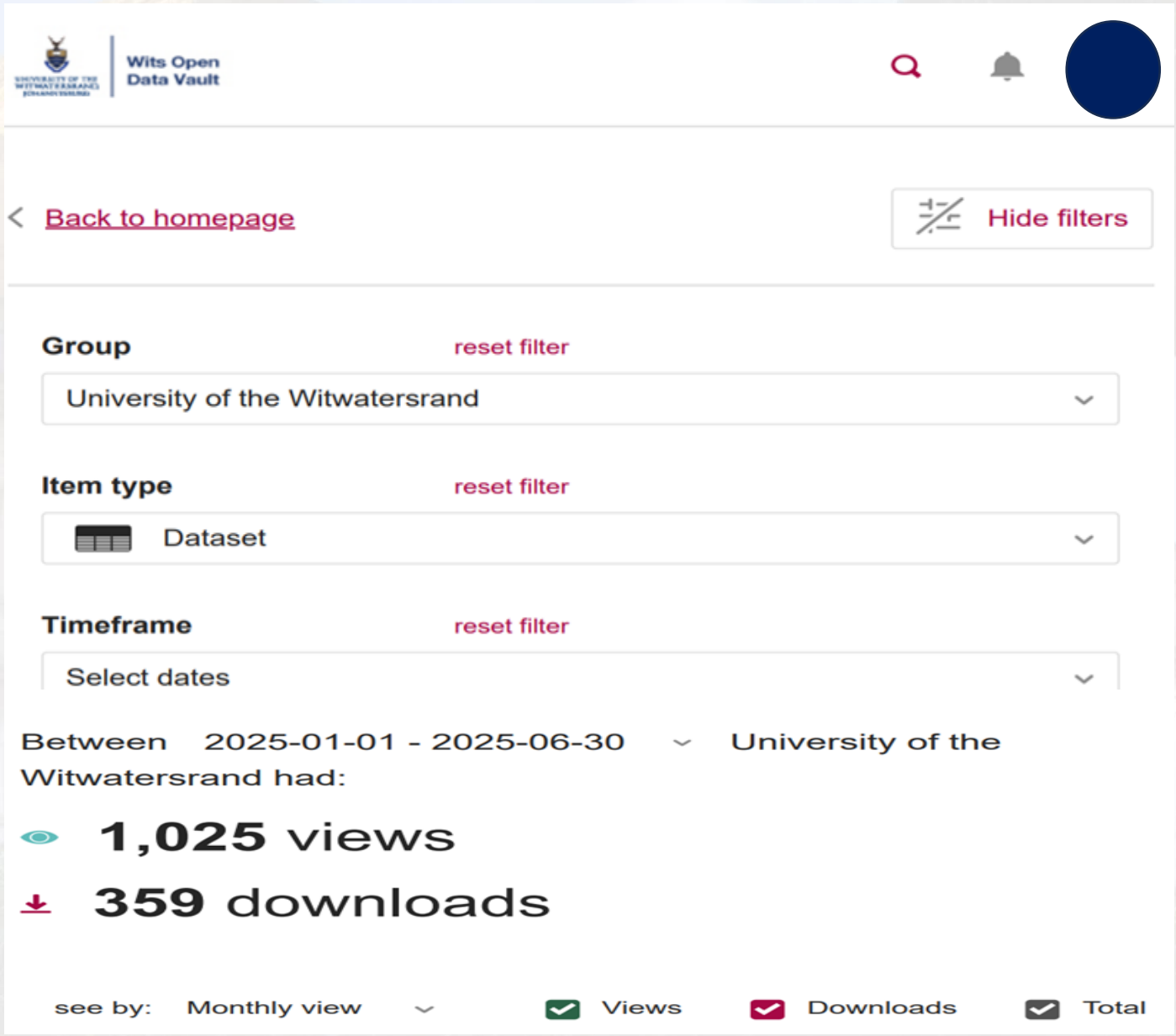
Publications	Datasets	Grants	Patents	Clinical Trials
75,319	57,120	20,749	734	362

Funding amount
USD 1.16 B

Digitally curated datasets in the Wits Open Data Repository - +10,000 (57,000 discovered in Dimensions only)



Globally viewed datasets and downloads



CC BY NC SA

Lazarus Matizirofa
Associate Director: Research, Scholarly Communication, Digital Systems & Services, Wits Libraries
lazarus.matizirofa@wits.ac.za
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0021-2738

Dr Daisy Selematsela
(Professor of Knowledge Management, UJ)
University Library Director, Wits Libraries
daisy.selematsela@wits.ac.za
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9035-1319