

# How to avoid collateral damage : Principles for linking data users to data providers

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## Abstract

The data explosion places a premium on good practice in data management. Priority data needs to be specified, managed by identified and responsible custodians, comprehensively documented and made discoverable through metadata, made compliant with relevant standards, be accessible, and provided with minimal constraints. Without agreed and effective processes for managing data in networked environments: duplication, loss of knowledge of data quality, difficulties in accessing fitness for purpose, confusion over authoritative data sources and other inefficiencies will strangle large-scale, multi-agency, cross-disciplinary projects.

The Office of Spatial Data Management (OSDM) has been established by the Australian Government to implement its Spatial Data Access and Pricing Policy. In essence, we focus on lowering the barriers to access and use of data required or held by Australian Government agencies. While scientists within any particular subject domain can usually rely on informal peer networks to assess the quality and relevance of data and usually experience few problems with negotiating access to suitable data, this can break down in cross-disciplinary environments, especially those involving government or private sector data owners. Drawing on experience with collaborative multi-thematic and multi-jurisdictional data networks in Australia and internationally, OSDM will outline the relevance of and good-practice solutions to issues such as custodianship, metadata, interoperability and other data standards, data access and licensing.

*Keywords:* custodianship, metadata, interoperability, standards, licensing.