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## A recipe for data: lessons from EUDAT

EUDAT understands what is important when it comes to common data services.

6 March 2014  
Hilary Hanahoe

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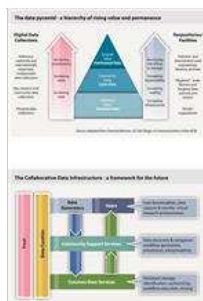
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EUDAT is a pan-European data infrastructure. Its mission is to design, develop, implement and offer 'Common Data Services' to all interested researchers and research communities.

The concept of Common Data Services was outlined in the [Riding the Wave](#) report. According to this report these services will be offered through the Collaborative Data Infrastructure (CDI) which is being identified by many different data initiatives at community, research organisation and cross-border level (disciplines and countries). Common data services obviously must be relevant to several communities and be available at European level and they need to be characterised by a high degree of openness:

- Open Access should be the default principle
- They should be independent of specific technologies since these will change frequently
- They should be flexible to allow new communities to be integrated (which is not a trivial requirement given the heterogeneity and fragmentation of the data landscape).

Following two years of intensive work on a first set of services, EUDAT understands what is important for common data services:

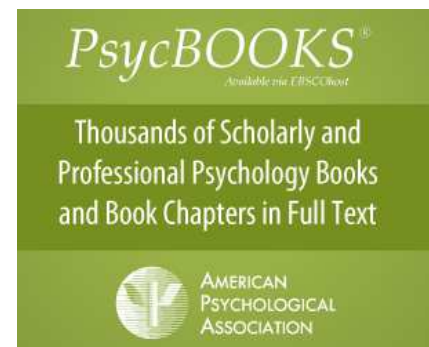
- **User communities must be in the driving seat** to select high-priority services and their major functional characteristics.
- Close **collaboration with senior technologists from different backgrounds** is essential to guarantee the openness, technology independence and flexibility required.
- The establishment of **trust is key** for acceptance of data services and trust has many dimensions including irrational ones. Furthermore establishing trust require considerable time investment.
- **Persistence of data and sustainability of the service** framework are key aspects of trust establishment.

### Too many cooks don't spoil the broth

In most cases common services can only be developed and shaped in close collaboration with interested research communities. Since its inception in 2011 EUDAT has explored ways to build generic technical services that support multiple research communities and works closely with a wide range of communities to deliver these services as part of the CDI. EUDAT uses novel methods to involve all the stakeholders, both in the discussions to determine the required services, and in the process of designing, developing and implementing those services. This experience has shown that actively involving the user communities in all steps is a must for infrastructure projects, and increases the likelihood of a broader uptake of the developed services as they are made available. For the research communities, there is much to be gained early on from such collaboration, for example, cross-fertilisation and harmonisation with respect to concepts and knowledge, organisation and technologies.

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