

Network Research Data Support

The year 2024 in facts and figures



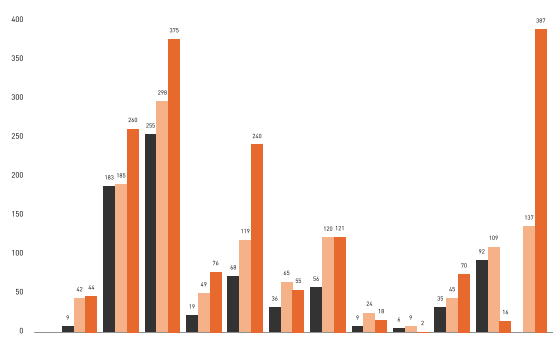
rdm.vu.nl

The Network Research Data Support (NeRDS) is the network of all support teams at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, helping researchers to find support and solutions to manage their data and software to work in line with the FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) principles. As the local Digital Competence Center of the university, NeRDS is organised to traverse borders, increase visibility and experience a sense of community in co-creating digital competencies to support research. Together, research support and IT staff develop and maintain solutions and resources for research data, software, and infrastructure, building sustainable support services by sharing knowledge and collaborate across the institution.

User support

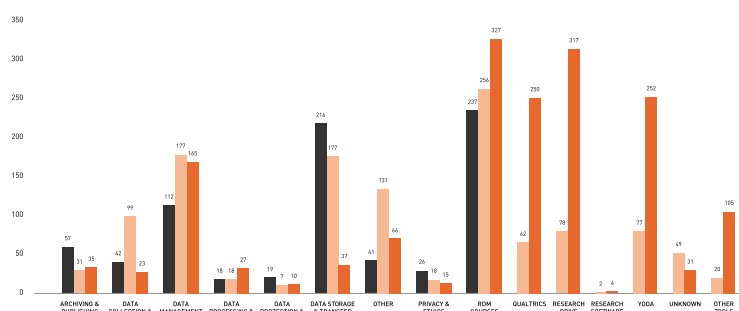
The VU RDM Support Desk is a central service of the library providing practical assistance, help and advice with RDM-related questions. The monitor includes only the questions addressed to the ticketing system of the central RDM Support Desk. Questions to faculty data stewards or IT are not included in this monitor, although some faculty data stewards collaborate in the central RDM Support Desk since 2024. This provides for further collaboration and professionalisation in handling data management questions from researchers.

In 2024 the number of questions has grown again as the RDM Support Desk received 1,664 calls, a growth of 400 questions compared to 2023. The main categories are questions



Support Desk calls per faculty

■ = 2022 ■ = 2023 ■ = 2024



Support Desk calls by category

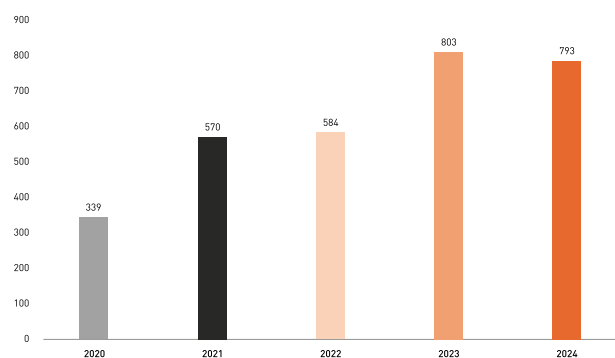
■ = 2022 ■ = 2023 ■ = 2024

about data management tools, data management plans and the courses provided by the RDM team. Especially the number of questions about Yoda, Research Drive and Qualtrics keeps growing. For each of these three tools the number of questions tripled between 2023 and 2024. This growth can partly be explained by the growth in use of these tools. Many questions have as their affiliation “unknown”. These are questions from students and external PhD candidates as they do not have an affiliation in the Service Now ticketing system and therefore are categorised as unknown. A lot of these questions concerns requests for a project environment in Yoda or Research Drive or resetting Qualtrics account. 94 questions about RDM courses that are labelled as unknown are from external PhD candidates.

Furthermore, we see a continuous growth in questions from the faculties of Science (BETA), Social Sciences (FSW) and Behavioral and Movement Sciences (FGB). By far most of these questions are related to data management tools and RDM courses. For FSW the large number is the effect of implementing qualitative guidelines with regards to data management, while missing a data steward for a few months.

Data Management Plans

With DMPonline researchers can write, share and download a Data Management Plan (DMP). 2023 gave a tremendous increase of the number of DMPs created towards 2022, whereas in 2024 the number of new DMPs was slightly lower compared to 2023: 793 new DMPs. The overall number of Data Management Plans created since the introduction of DMPonline is 3307. The vast majority (80%) of DMPs are created using the VU-templates for NWO and ZonNW grants.



New Data Management Plans 2020 - 2024

Training and workshops

The Network organised:

- 15 data management courses for PhDs with 246 participants
- 2 data carpentries with 17 participants
- 5 software carpentries with 90 participants
- 1 OSF training with 25 participants
- 1 tailor-made data documentation workshop with 12 participants

NeRDS Community

The Network RDS is a community of researchers and research support staff within VU Amsterdam, who work with data and software management, exchange knowledge and experience on different aspects of research data and software management. The community consists of about 100 members and was using Slack as community platform for sharing knowledge. Early 2024 the community platform was migrated to the NeRDS MS Teams environment. In 2024 the network organised:

- 8 Data Steward Meetups for faculty and library data stewards
- 8 RDM Community Meetings for the network support staff
- 9 Data Conversations for support staff and researchers with 250 registrations
- 2 tailor-made training weeks for support staff (the Summer- and Winter training days)
- 8 Programming Cafés (Bytes & Bites) with 200 participants
- 6 RDS Newsletters. The newsletter has about 330 subscribers (sign up for the newsletter [here](#)).

RDM Information

RDM support website

In November 2024 the [Research Support Handbook](#) was introduced as the main source of information on research data- and software management. The Handbook is a Github based environment, covering detailed information and guidelines on data- and software management. Development and maintenance of the VU Research Support Handbook is based on collaboration between faculties and central services and a major step towards a community-led information resource on data- and software management for VU researchers, with a transparent content development and decision-making process. The Handbook has replaced most of the existing information channels like the VU RDS portal and the RDM Libguide.

Policies

In 2024 a new data- and software management policy was confirmed. This third iteration of the data management policy also includes policies on software management, as well as improved guidance for licensing of deposited research data. Also, a policy on the classification of research data has been created and published. This Research Data Classification Policy is new and addresses classification of research data in terms of availability, integrity and confidentiality, and outlines how the classification process should be carried out. All policy documents are published on the [VU Research Support Handbook](#).

RDM Tools

Store, publish and archive

In January 2023 Yoda was introduced as the preferred VU platform to store, share, manage and archive research data in a cost-effective manner during and after a research project. Usage of Yoda has grown

steadily over the past two years, in the number of users as well as in the number of datasets and volume of data stored. Currently there are 591 users, storing 38 TB of data of almost 300 research projects.

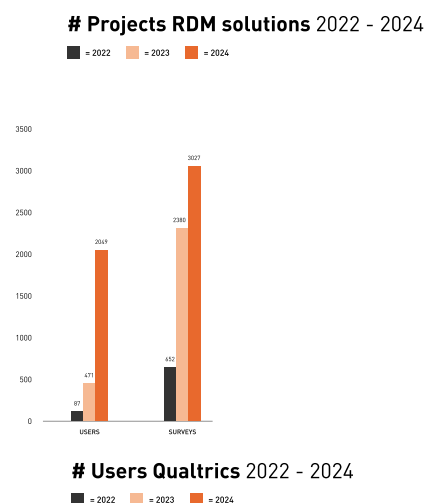
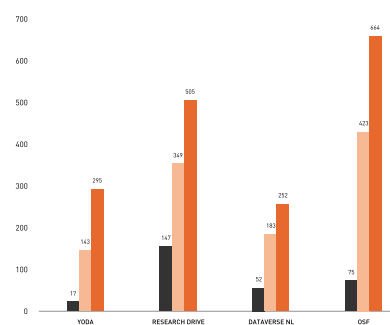
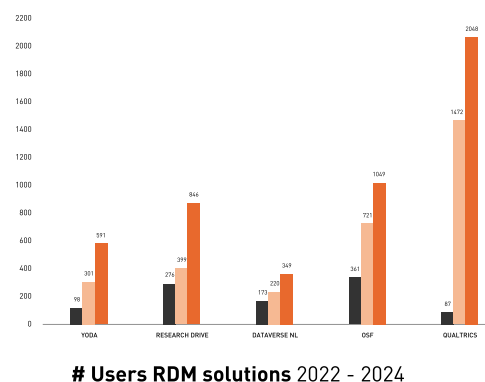
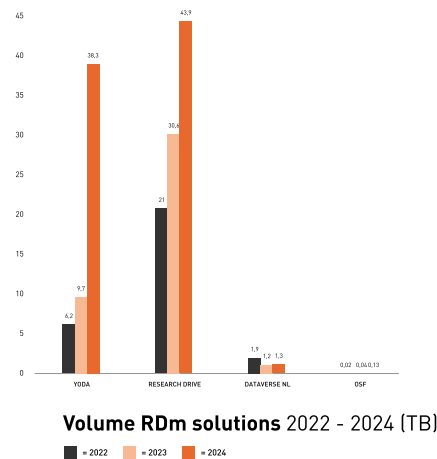
Next to Yoda, other RDM solutions are recommended by the VU. DataverseNL is the platform of DANS to easily publish research data. Research Drive is recommended as a platform for easy storage and sharing of data with other researchers within or outside the VU. The Open Science Framework (OSF) is recommended for open data publication. And SciStor is the on-premises solution for storage and analysis of large data volumes.

The use of all data storage solutions has grown further in 2024, especially for Yoda, Research Drive and Scistor. The latter passed the 1 PB and is with 1,1 PB of used storage by far the most intensive used VU data storage facility. The growth of data storage in Yoda is also massive, from almost 10 TB in 2023 to almost 40 TB in 2024.

To help researchers to choose the most appropriate VU storage solution for their research data, in 2022 the [data storage finder](#) was introduced.

Qualtrics

This survey platform has become available in 2023 for all VU staff and students under a VU-wide licence. A total of 2,048 users created 3,026 surveys in 2024. Qualtrics is being used by researchers as well as by students. About two thirds of requests concerning Qualtrics originate from students using the tool for educational purposes. Most of these questions relate to resetting accounts in Qualtrics (improved security settings since 2023), working with Collaborations (internal and external; many students think they have a VU Qualtrics account, whilst they have a free Qualtrics account/ are not aware they still use a faculty brand) and queries about how to use the tool, available features, and functionalities. The remainder concerns support for migration for employees/ researchers from faculty brands to the central brand.



Contact

For RDM information: rdm.vu.nl - For RDM support calls: services.vu.nl - For the RDM support desk: rdm@vu.nl
 For further information about the Network Research Data Support or this RDM Monitor, you can contact
 Marcel Ras (Coordinator network Research Data Support), m.j.m.ras@vu.nl