



figshare for institutions

A closer look at...

PROJECTS



Luke Stevens

Data Management Coordinator
at Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI)



Sian Woodward

Collections Manager of the Museum of Domestic
Design & Architecture (MoDA) at Middlesex University

Projects are dedicated spaces where researchers can collaborate on a specific ongoing project. Projects have their own pages, are useful for collaborative work both within the institution and for collaborators outside the institution, and are secure places for sharing sensitive data.

Below are two use cases for projects. The first is with Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI) who use projects to archive and maintain projects within the institute (and, soon, for sensitive data). The second is with the Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture (MoDA) at Middlesex University who are using projects for individual research projects within the museum.

Luke Stevens: I'm from the Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI). We're collocated and associated with the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne. A good chunk of our research is clinical research, but there's also a large amount of population health research (so, nothing to do with the hospital - it's out in the community). There's also a lot of basic lab research that also sits outside of the hospital.

My role is to be on the lookout for things that will be useful for researchers, like training and IT systems. We identified a need for something that could help our researchers with their data archival: preserving the valuable outputs of their research efforts. This includes publications, datasets - anything that could be potentially valuable in the future and an important record of what had been done in the past. We were finding that if anyone had any questions about these old research projects, whoever was left - however tenuously associated with that research project - would have to go poking through network drives trying to find out where the important documents and datasets were. So what we were after was an archive of project outputs. The ability for figshare to have that project-centric focus was what really piqued our interest.

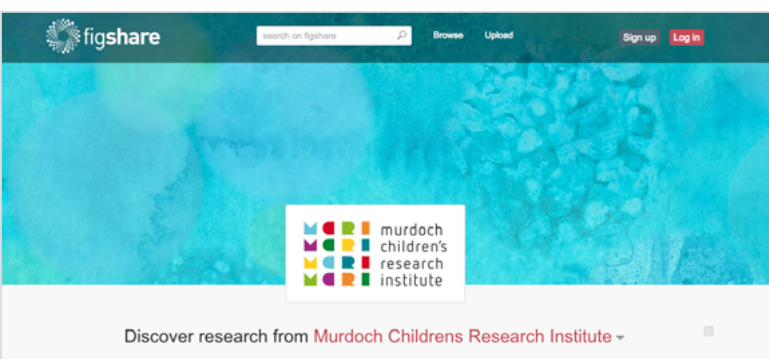
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Luke Stevens, Data Management Coordinator at Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI)

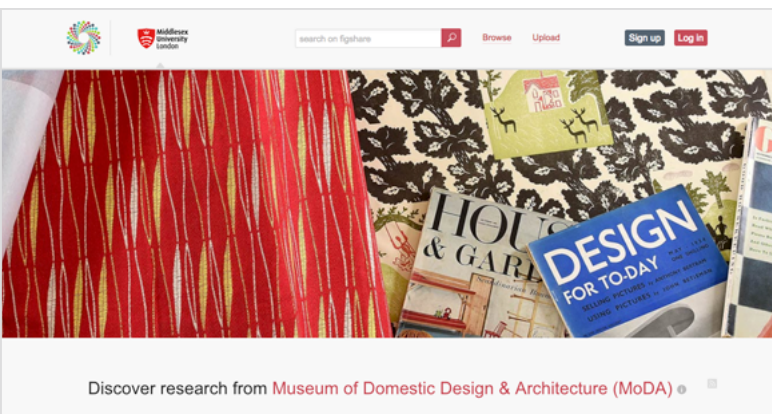
Sian Woodward: I'm the collections manager at the Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture (MoDA) which is part of Middlesex University in north London. It's a university museum and it's been part of Middlesex University and its previous incarnations since 1967 when the Silver Studio collection - which is a design studio - was given to Hornsey College of Art. Being a university museum gives us a different slant on the museum world in that we have slightly more of a research focus. We run research projects as well as traditional museum tasks.

We were looking at the digital outputs of our research projects and wondering how to maintain those in the long term and how to make them accessible in the short term. It so happened that Middlesex University was also looking into this as our parent body and trying to develop a pilot research data management service for their researchers, of which figshare is part.

In MoDA, there are six of us that constitute the museum. We're part of the university, but we sit alone in some ways, so we were seen as quite a useful group to try things out. We've been made a subgroup of the Middlesex University instance of figshare.



The project element has been quite a useful way of thinking about how to manage a particular research project and the researchers within the project.



Sian, you have some examples of Japanese stencil panels in your project. Where were these living before they were in a project in figshare?

Sian: These were previously in someone’s file storage. The university has recently moved to Office 365 so we’ve moved a lot of things to OneDrive. We did have shared folders, but they were vulnerable and they weren’t working very well for us. Across the university, the research data manager has been finding that people have hard drives in cupboards, servers sitting in different places, and files sitting on people’s computers.

When I started, about a year ago, I did a digital asset audit to find out where everything was being stored. It was part of that work that lead us to try to better manage the outputs of our research projects so that they weren’t lost.

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Collections Manager of the Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture (MoDA) at Middlesex University

How exactly are you using figshare projects for your research projects?

Luke: It’s still early days. So far, we only have items in there that are public and the purpose of which is to be public: specific publications, documents, standard operating procedures, etc. Something that wasn’t on our radar originally but has proven to be of great interest to people is the fact that these items get DOIs.

Once we have moved from figshare’s Amazon S3 storage to our own organizational storage, we’ll begin to use projects for things that are private and confidential. For example, there might be some datasets on human research participants. Once files live on MCRI storage, we can create figshare items for them and publish them confidentially so that only the people who are members of the project can see them, but it’s published as a valuable output and is preserved. We still want to get items that aren’t publicly available into figshare because it can be a permanent archival record of the research activity and its output.

Part of the task for us now is to broaden the usage and deliver some training. We have the curation workflow enabled, so anything that is marked for publication will come through to me first (at least initially) to check that the metadata is thoroughly completed and that nothing is being published that shouldn’t be.

We’ve also allocated the storage so that 100% of it goes to projects rather than individuals. All of the outputs that are produced are going to be part of a project; even if it’s not a typical research project, there is some exercise that could be labelled a project, even if it’s just a literature review.

Sian: Initially, Middlesex University had been looking more at internal research - researchers have Middlesex logins and could therefore login to Middlesex’s instance of figshare. For MoDA, we tend to have research projects that have a mix of external and internal researchers. The Katagami project we’ve created on figshare involves external researchers and is interdisciplinary. We have a lot of different

kinds of data from datasets in the traditional sense
- for example, someone has plotted the patterns of
the stencils using mathematical, computational data
- through to videos and images.

We were trying to work out how to gather that re-
search together and allow the researchers on the
project, who are in different locations, to be able to
see each other's research. So we set up a figshare
project and explained to the researchers how to use
it. They've each set up their own figshare account
and have uploaded to the project.

We're still testing it out, but the next stage will be
curating the research and working out what will be
published and what will be available on request. It's
useful that there are levels of access on figshare so
that we can store all the project data together, but
can choose which outputs to make public. The DOIs
are going to be really useful for referencing and ci-
tations.

In the future, we may try the non-logged in work-
flow, which would allow our researchers to depos-
it their outputs into the group without having to
create figshare accounts. We've set this up on our
testing environment and will see how well it works
for us.

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