ReSA News: November 2019

This month, we have a call for participation to an important survey, a link to great recognition of the role of software in research from the UK government and news on the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative for Open Source Software Projects.

If you have any interesting news that you think the ReSA community might like to know, please forward to Claire Wyatt, RSE Community Manager.

Call for Participation

The mission of the Research Software Alliance (ReSA) is to bring research software communities together to collaborate on the advancement of research software, to achieve the vision of research software being recognised and valued as a fundamental and vital component of research worldwide. To deliver on this mission, ReSA has created a taskforce to identify the different areas of the research software landscape. This taskforce aims to identify relevant organisations and initiatives through a public survey, to ensure ReSA engages across the breadth of the landscape.
ReSA is inviting members of the ReSA google group to participate in the pilot phase of this work, by adding details of research software organisations, initiatives, programs, projects, grants, communities of practice, networks, journals, conferences, etc. to this survey. Please provide responses to the survey by **Friday 6 December 2019.**

After the pilot phase, the survey will be more broadly shared within the research software sector. ReSA plans to use this understanding to write an article to educate the research community about the importance of software, and/or to find areas to involve additional representatives in ReSA. Information submitted to this survey will be publicly available. Respondent's details are anonymous unless respondents choose to provide their own email address. If you have any questions then please contact Matthias Liffers at matthias.liffers@ardc.edu.au.

UKRI Strategy recognises the critical role of software in Research

"The near-ubiquity of software [in research] means that it is not possible to disentangle the quality of the software from the quality of the research. Unreliable and untested software leads to unreliable results that cannot be trusted", states a recent report on opportunities to grow the UK's research capability. This report, produced by UK Research and Innovation, will be used to guide the UK government's strategy for research investment - which is planned to increase to at least 2.4% of Gross Domestic Product by 2027. This is possibly the first time such a high-profile report has clearly identified the critical role of software and the people who create it.

The report cites research from the Software Sustainability Institute on the prevalence of software in research and notes that Research Software Engineers are "particularly critical" in universities, research institutes and business. It shows the SSI at the heart of the UK's current national research and innovation e-infrastructure ecosystem (see Figure 17). Importantly, it supports plans for investment into software maintenance, which will "enable the full value to be extracted from software throughout its lifetime", and a national facility of research software engineering, which could help broker access to skills across the UK.

It's great that this report recognises both the critical role that software plays in research and that this reliance on software necessitates investment to ensure the quality and trustworthiness of research.

For more information, see chapter 8 of the report (starting on page 114).

Chan Zuckerberg Initiative Awards $5 Million for Open Source Software Projects Essential to Science

The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative announce $5million funding to support open source software projects that are essential to biomedical research. As part of CZI's Essential Open Source Software for Science program, these grants will support software maintenance, growth, development, and community engagement for over 40 critical open source tools.

"Open source software accelerates the work scientists carry out each day, whether it's searching a genome sequence for a disease gene, tracking a disease outbreak, or counting cells in a microscope image," said CZI Head of Science Cori Bargmann. "Scientists are only as good as their tools, and we're thrilled to support open source projects that will benefit the entire scientific community and help every scientist be a better scientist."

Summary of 32 proposals

The full press release

A Medium post with some additional information about the application pool and the process: https://medium.com/@cziscience/the-invisible-foundations-of-biomedicine-4ab7f8d4f5dd