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# Text data mining and data quality management for research information systems in the context of open data and open science

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## Abstract

In the implementation and use of research information systems (RIS) in scientific institutions, text data mining and semantic technologies are a key technology for the meaningful use of large amounts of data. It is not the collection of data that is difficult, but the further processing and integration of the data in RIS. Data is usually not uniformly formatted and structured, such as texts and tables that can not be linked. These include various source systems with their different data formats such as project and publication databases, CERIF and RCD data model, etc.

Internal and external data sources continue to develop. On the one hand, they must be constantly synchronized and the results of the data links checked. On the other hand, the texts must be processed in natural

language and certain information extracted. Using text data mining, the quality of the metadata is analyzed and this identifies the entities and general keywords. So that the user is supported in the search for interesting research information. The information age makes it easier to store huge amounts of data and increase the number of documents on the internet, in institutions' intranets, in newswires and blogs is overwhelming. Search engines should help to specifically open up these sources of information and make them usable for administrative and research purposes.

Against this backdrop, the aim of this paper is to provide an overview of text data mining techniques and the management of successful data quality for RIS in the context of open data and open science in scientific institutions and libraries, as well as to provide ideas for their

application. In particular, solutions for the RIS will be presented.

**Keywords.** Current research information systems (CRIS), Research information systems (RIS), Research information,

Standardization, Text analysis, Data mining, Knowledge discovery database, Data quality management, Open data, Big data, Open science.

## 1 Introduction

The flood of research information in higher education and research organizations is steadily growing. Research information systems (RIS) are used to support the collection, integration, processing, storage and presentation of research information. With the help of RIS it is possible to get an up-to-date overview of research activities, to process and manage information on scientific activities, publications, applications, projects as well as research data, press and media reports, etc. For the evaluation and interpretation of the research activities of a scientific organization, data quality and validation are crucial. In order to ensure the quality of RIS in the long term, it is recommended that data quality management (data profiling, data cleansing and data monitoring) be viewed as a holistic and continuous improvement process.

Data quality management becomes even more crucial in the new ecosystem of open data and open science, an “approach to research that is collaborative, transparent and accessible” (European Commission, 2017). The policy of open science has a direct impact of research management and research evaluation insofar henceforth they have to consider and assess new forms of research practice and aspects of openness. Moreover, the process of research evaluation is changing, shifting from a traditional top-down strategy towards more interaction, dialogue and co-production (Tatum, 2017).

The knowledge of research activities and research results is becoming an increasingly important factor for the success of an organization. Yet, this knowledge requires, alongside quantitative data, more and more qualitative information extracted from a large variety of heterogeneous and often unstructured sources on the web, such as data and text files in digital libraries, open repositories, social networks and other platforms. For this reason, the new technology of *text mining* or *text data mining* of the rapid growth of digital, unstructured and semi-structured internal and external data is becoming increasingly important as a scientific method.

Text mining is a technique for analyzing documents or texts and extracting new knowledge unknown to the user. Thus, this developed technology is relevant for all scientific institutions and libraries that produce texts (such as editorial offices and publishers), edit text archives (libraries) or in which large amounts of text are constantly being generated. The aim of text mining techniques is to uncover interesting information or patterns in unstructured textual documents by allowing them to process the vast amount of natural language words and textures, and to handle the treatment of uncertain and fuzzy data. Text mining is a new area of

research to solve problems of information overload through the use of data mining techniques, machine learning, computational linguistics (natural language processing), information retrieval, and knowledge management.

The aim of this paper is to present the technology of text data mining and the data quality management and to show how both can improve the performance of RIS, especially in the context of open data and open science.

## 2 Research information systems

A current research information system (CRIS) or research information system (RIS) is a *database management* or a *specialized federated information system*, that provides a continually updated, comprehensive directory of researchers and research activities (like for example, employees, projects, publications, patents, cooperation partners, awards and conferences etc.) of an organization. It serves to make the portfolio of research activities more visible and thus provide an overview for all interested or users.

The selection of specifications to be included in the RIS is based on the German Research Core Dataset (RCD). The RCD is a standard for the collection, provision and exchange of research information. The RIS in the context of the RCD is the instrument for the uniform definition and structuring of research information. To reach reliable data quality and optimized reuse of research information in and out of the institutions and libraries of distributed and heterogeneous databases, it is important to establish a high degree of connectivity through RCD for the effective exchange of research information in order to avoid duplication and multiple input of research information and the resulting sources of error. In addition to improving data quality, the RCD can greatly simplify work and reporting processes.

The building blocks of a RIS architecture are distinguished in three-stage processes (*data collection and data integration, data storage and data presentation*) (as illustrated in Fig. 1).

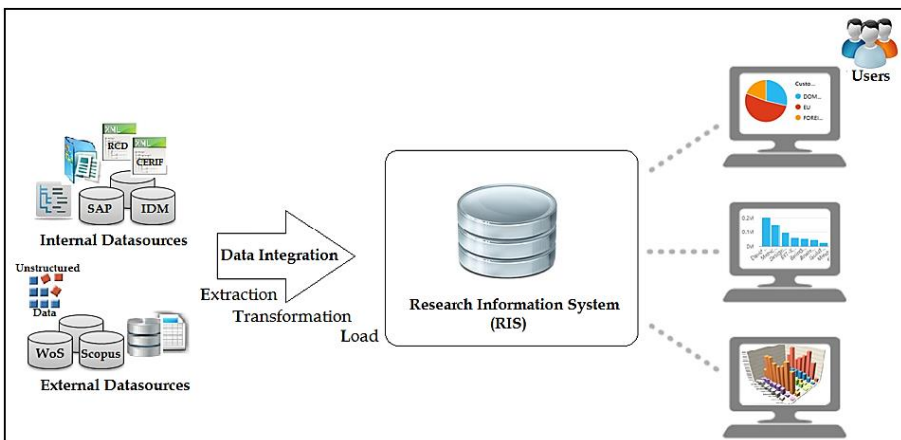


Figure 1. Architecture of RIS (Azeroual et al. 2018c, d)

The **data collection** contains the internal and external data sources. The RIS collects information about the research activities and research results associated with institutions and their scientists by automatically synchronizing existing data volumes with various data sources, so that this qualified research information is on hand to the management as a better basis for decision-making. For an automated data import from existing systems, a connection of internal as well as external application systems can be realized. These application systems, which ideally can be included to collect research information, are the identity management system and the campus management system as internal systems, as well as public publication databases and project databases. In the case of publications, these include, for example, Web of Science, Scopus or PubMed and the financial system (e.g. SAP) of third-party funds management for the data on third-party funded projects and the personnel management system (e.g. PAISY) for information about the scientific staff.

Offers for the standardized collection, provision and exchange of research information in RIS are the Research Core Dataset (RCD) data model and the Common European Research Information Format (CERIF) data model.

The **data integration** transfers, processes and compresses the required data from source systems (different information systems with different data formats and structures), which is described as the Extraction, Transformation and Load (ETL) process. In the extraction phase, data is extracted and pulled out from various source systems or source documents and provided for further processing steps in the input layer of the RIS. The transformation phase has the task to prepare the data for the loading process and to clean it up in order to convert the data extracts into a uniform internal format. The cleansing of incorrect source data is absolutely necessary and will be detected and corrected by plausibility checks. This data cleansing is done in four steps: filtering, harmonization, aggregation, and enrichment. In the next and last phase, the data is loaded into the RIS, there they are stored in a structured and normalized.

The aim of the ETL process is to ensure that the prepared data can be stored efficiently and persistently in data storage.

The **data storage** includes the RIS and its applications that merge, manage and analyze data held at the underlying level. If the data is present in the RIS, the reports required for evaluation can be set up.

In the **data presentation** is the target group specific preparation and presentation of the analysis results for the end user (decision-makers). These are made available as reports using the business intelligence tools. Beside to various reporting options, portals and websites of the organizations can also be filled here.

### **3 Standardization of research information**

To ensure the aggregation, standardized collection and interchangeability of research information and to be able to integrate as many decentralized stocks of research information as possible, there are (inter)national standards for supporting RIS.

Two measures for the standardization of research information are the well-known international standard CERIF of the European organization euroCRIS<sup>1</sup> and Research Core Dataset (RCD)<sup>2</sup>, which the German Council of Science and Humanities recommended in 2013. To support and advise the higher education institutions and non-university research institutions of the German science system on the implementation on the RCD, a corresponding helpdesk was established at the German Center for Higher Education Research and Science Studies (DZHW)<sup>3</sup> in Berlin, which answers questions about the content and technical of the RCD and provides an information base and cooperate events and workshops on the RCD.

- CERIF is a format recommended by the EU for its members that provides descriptions for research information (such as *persons, projects, organizations, publications, patents, products, funding, equipment* etc.). The CERIF model<sup>4</sup> can serve as a basis for RIS as an exchange format among various systems of research information.
- The implementation of the RCD at higher education institutions and non-university research institutions in Germany takes place on a voluntary basis. The RCD is a young data standard for research activities and considers it to be more effective and simpler for the complex and inconsistent reporting process for all research stakeholders from the German science system, as well as to reduce the collection of data from research activities and to facilitate the comparability of research data. The RCD defines core data that should be kept in aggregated form by all higher education institutions and non-university research institutions for various documentation and reporting processes. These include the focus areas of (a) *employees*, (b) *support for young researchers*, (c) *third-party funded projects*, (d) *patents and spin-offs*, (e) *publications* and (f) *research infrastructures* (see Biesenbender and Hornbostel, 2016 for details on the structure and logic of the RCD). In order to make the data compatible and interoperable at the international level, the technical RCD data model<sup>5</sup> offered was developed on the basis of the CERIF format.

The following Fig. 2 illustrates the example of the XML schema as a data exchange format for CERIF and RCD.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.eurocris.org/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.kerndatensatz-forschung.de/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dzhw.eu>

<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.eurocris.org/cerif/main-features-cerif>

<sup>5</sup> See [https://kerndatensatz-forschung.de/version1/technisches\\_datenmodell/](https://kerndatensatz-forschung.de/version1/technisches_datenmodell/)



several ways and on different levels, and RIS must be able to monitor and evaluate these new features.

A recent report written by the EC “Working Group on Rewards under Open Science” provides a matrix for the evaluation of research careers fully acknowledging open science practices (European Commission, 2017). This matrix OS-CAM provides a comprehensive framework that can be used to develop evaluation systems for various situations and contexts. It proposes a large number of possible evaluation criteria for the assessment of six domains and 24 open science activities, i.e. datasets and research results, risk management, peer review, knowledge exchange, teaching and even personal qualities.

OS-CAM tries to describe doing open science on the individual level, and it illustrates the multiple dimensions and complexity of what is called “open science”. On the institutional level, the Harvard Open Access Project (HOAP)<sup>8</sup> from the Berkman Klein Center may provide another framework for the assessment of open science policies and services in universities, research organisations and other scientific structures.

RIS are not designed for a given science policy but are (or at least should be) “policy agnostic”, able to comply with traditional research strategies as well as with the emerging new ecosystem of open science. Of course, insofar this new ecosystem changes the way research is done and modifies the way it is evaluated, it will have an immediate and direct impact on the RIS themselves. For instance, the French National Plan calls for the recognition of open science in assessments of researchers and institutions and requests to prioritise quality over quantity when evaluating research (MESRI, 2018).

Regarding the impact on RIS, we can distinguish three aspects.

1. Information sources: The RIS must be able to process data from new information sources, beyond the traditional data providers and outside academia, in order to monitor and evaluate new configurations of openness, involving other people, institutions and activities like NGOs, social networks, corporate companies etc. The reliability of these sources may be uncertain, such as the quality of the data; probably this means to adopt a strategy similar to the “big data” approach in the corporate sector.
2. Results: Open science changes the way how research is valued, and open science monitoring requires other metrics than the traditional H-index, impact factor article counting etc. “Evaluation outcomes aimed at present and future role of openness in research” (Tatum, 2017). Thus RIS must be able to produce open science related knowledge in a reliable way, representing societal impact (such as altmetrics<sup>9</sup>), openness (such as the SPARC open access spectrum<sup>10</sup>) or other qualitative information about participation, networking etc.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://cyber.harvard.edu/research/hoap>

<sup>9</sup> <https://altmetrics.org/manifesto/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://sparcopen.org/our-work/howopenisit/>



3. Process: Finally, RIS must take into account the transformation on the research evaluation process itself. As already mentioned above, research evaluation is shifting from a traditional top-down strategy towards more interaction, dialogue and co-production (Tatum, 2017), and this transformation takes place on all levels, on the individual (career assessment, grant awarding), local (institutional), organisational and national level. For the RIS, this means more transparency and more participation from the very beginning; both are critical factors for the success of a RIS, especially in the environment of open science (Schöpfel, 2015). Also, its implementation should be an opportunity to make researchers aware of the new challenges (de Castro, 2018). In other words, a closed RIS in an environment of open science makes no sense.

Open data means data sharing and data reuse, and this applies also to research information. How do RIS produce reusable data? How do they reuse data produced from other systems? And how do they make research information available as open as possible? And do they, really? These questions are all related to standards and policy.

Returning to quality, (Azeroual et al. 2018c) highlight the need for high quality data produced by RIS is an essential consideration for evaluating research activities of all institutions. Because of the increasing heterogeneity of data input, of new evaluation processes and of the requirement of standard, machine-readable output (interoperability with other systems and infrastructures, cf. FAIR guiding principles), the quality especially of metadata becomes a crucial asset of the development and administration of RIS (Simons, 2017).

The impact of open science on the implementation of a RIS has been described by different case studies, with special attention to the role of academic libraries and information professionals (see for instance Clements and Proven, 2015 and Brennan, 2018). In the following chapters, our paper will focus on the metadata problem, especially when related to unstructured and semi-structured data. How can RIS produce and process high quality output based on low quality input?

## **5 Text data mining**

### **5.1 Definition**

For over thirty years, text mining has been a relevant topic in research, although at the beginning it was only used in a few disciplines (Upshall, 2014). The term text mining is a special form of data mining and is referred to as "*text data mining*" or "*text analytics*". The text data mining refers to computer-based methods for the semantic analysis of texts, which support the automatic or semi-automatic structuring of texts, especially very large amounts of texts (Heyer et al. 2008). In particular, text data mining aims to identify and extract knowledge that is implicit in the text that the user of the information system does not know.

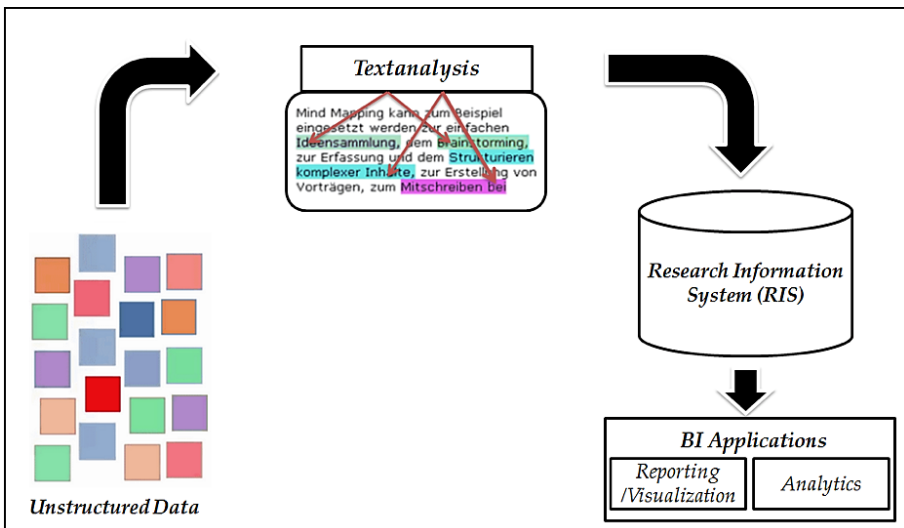
### **5.2 Metadata – handling unstructured and semi-structured data**

Higher education institutions and non-university research institutions that manage their research information with larger data sets in RIS face the chal-

lenge because their information is not available in structured data but in semi-structured or unstructured data. The unstructured data comprises, among others, text documents or text publications in Word or PDFs, memos, emails, RSS feeds, wikis, images, video or audio data etc. Semi-structured data include, for example, CERIF or RCD XML or HTML files. Such data can be a time-consuming burden for RIS staff in institutions and libraries to seek and thus make bad decisions, because the unstructured and semi-structured data are stored in different formats and designated by different technologies. To solve this problem, metadata, which is data about data, should be stored with unstructured or semi-structured data. By implementing text data mining techniques, for instance classification and clustering algorithms (see below), metadata about research activities can be generated and organized (Seth et al. 2009 and Bhanuse et al. 2016).

### 5.3 Integrating text data mining into research information systems

Today, information on scientific activities and outcomes of science organizations is collected, maintained and published in a variety of forms and vast amounts of data through RIS. However, these are mostly unstructured in various forms and media and present a great challenge. A traditional, manual approach is not enough to investigate large amounts of data or document collections from various meta-databases (e.g. PubMed, Scopus etc.). Therefore, text data mining techniques can be helpful to analyze large numbers of text publications, library-produced data or even the content of blogs or tweets. The following Fig. 3 shows a framework for supporting text data mining in RIS.



**Figure 3.** Overview of support text data mining framework to RIS

The peculiarities of text data mining are the structure of the data as well as the origin of the data. The data type to be examined is unstructured text from internal or external sources.

In the following section, the most important techniques of text data mining for supporting RIS in the context of open data and open science are presented in an overview for the institutions and libraries that use them.

#### **5.4 Techniques in text data mining to support research information systems**

Because of the vast amount of textual data available in RIS from various internal and external sources, it is not possible to read them completely and correctly and perform a manual analysis. In this case, text data mining is needed to convert text into data that can then be examined using various analysis techniques. These techniques are classification, clustering, NLP, information extraction and information retrieval.

##### ***Document classification / Categorization***

Classification assigns research information in different categories. For example, in this way publication texts can be classified according to their content-related focus (e.g. computer science, economics, politics etc.). Classification procedures identify patterns to make statements about objects based on existing research information. First, the already existing objects are grouped according to their known feature or behavior regarding the problems to be analyzed in different classes. From this set of objects a classification model is developed, with which one can then predict the class affiliation of a new object. In the classification analysis methods of artificial intelligence or decision-tree-oriented methods can be used.

##### ***Document clustering***

Clustering consolidates documents into clusters. Clusters of documents can be used to quickly find similar documents and detect duplicates. Unlike classification, clustering does not use a predefined set of terms or taxonomies that are used to group the documents (Liao et al. 2012). Instead, groups are created based on the document features that appear in a set of documents to be clustered.

##### ***Natural Language Processing (NLP)***

In order to extract research information from natural language texts, it is necessary to use methods of natural language processing. NLP is an application of computational linguistics, which is responsible for the communication and interaction of humans and computers. The goal is for computers to understand human statements, from single words to complex texts, and to process their content or based on given circumstances, generating natural language as output (Chopra et al. 2013). For the automatic semantic analysis of texts, the use of ontologies is an essential tool. Ontologies are controlled, structured vocabularies that contain entities of a domain and their relationships to each other. They are necessary to make texts interpretable for the computer (Carstensen et al. 2010). Ontologies are used for named entity recognition (NER), which identifies proper names of entities (such as persons, organizations, etc.) in texts. This can be used to automatically keyword texts.

##### ***Information extraction***

In information extraction (IE), research information is found in textual documents and translated into structured form (that is, identifying specific

text passages and assigning them to structured objects). For example, research information about persons, organizations, publications, projects, etc. can be found and correlated.

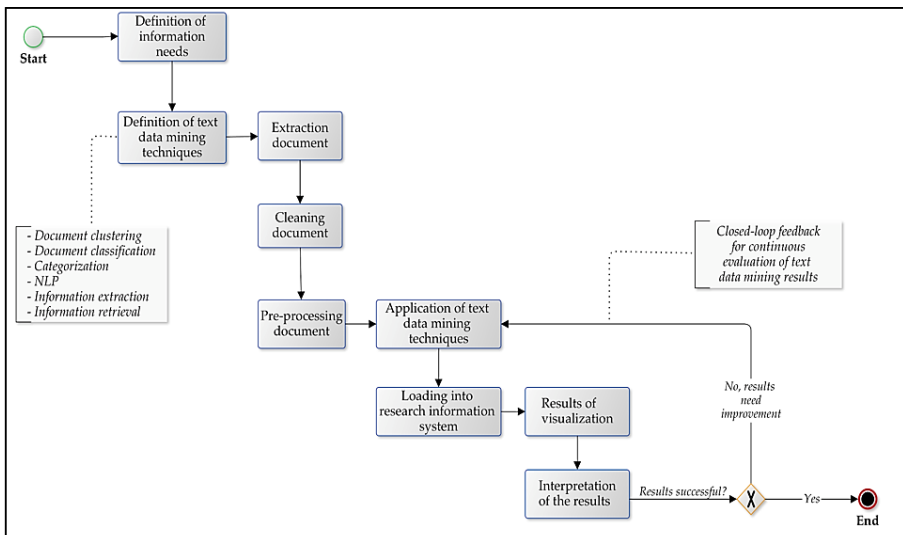
**Information retrieval**

Information retrieval (IR) is the finding or retrieving of relevant documents that provide answers to specific questions. Here, texts are searched for using keyword requests, and a common example is keyword searches using search engines like Google, Yahoo, or Bing. Thus, the amount of relevant documents should be found by means of keywords and presented to the user in a result set.

Many institutions are still limited in their RIS still on the pure data collection and often go cumbersome ways to make it usable for themselves. With these steps of text data mining techniques, all institutions can better analyze and understand their stored texts in order to make appropriate decisions.

**5.5 A model for research information processing**

To assist the scientific institutions and libraries, the following developed process could be used to extract new and interesting information from different sources of unstructured documents using the techniques of text data mining and to derive new conclusions (see Fig. 4). In carrying out these featured text data mining techniques, there are a variety of supported commercial open source software solutions that offer multiple text data mining techniques. Nowadays, a developer, but no longer an expert, has to be in order to harness the potential of texts.



**Figure 4.** Process of knowledge discovery using text data mining techniques

Text data mining techniques can be used not only in scientific institutions, but also by libraries to improve their services, such as improving search and support in keyword coding.

## 6 Data quality management as a success factor for research information systems

In the scientific institutions and libraries, the management places the highest demands on the quality of the research information to be processed and evaluated. One of the biggest hurdles in securing data quality is typically the heterogeneity of the various internal and external data sources. Owning the right technology is just one way of ensuring data quality in RIS. Much more important to success is the use of the right methodology. This can be achieved by using the following data quality management as a cycle with its three phases, which must be run continuously to achieve a sustainable improvement and increase in data quality in RIS (as shown in Fig. 5).

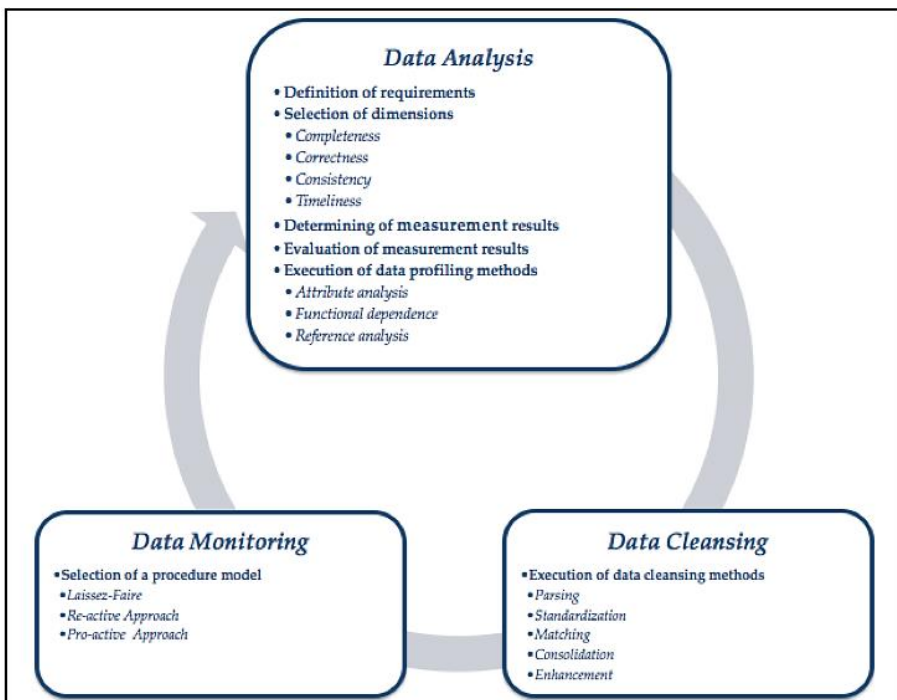


Figure 5. Data quality management cycle in RIS

The three phases capture data analysis, data cleansing and data monitoring, and together form a proven, practical approach to data governance - towards controlled data management in RIS that enables institutions to analyze, cleanse and control their research information. These phases are explained in more detail below.

In the first phase, the data quality criteria and corresponding requirements for them must be defined. Requirements can be set by different parties, e.g. especially by users of a RIS, but also by the RIS administrator. By determining the requirements, the data quality can be measured with appropriate metrics - completeness, correctness, consistency and timeliness (Azeroual, et al. 2018c), because they are easy to measure and

represent a particularly representative illustration of the reporting for the users lead to an improved and transparent basis for decision-making (Azeroual, et al. 2018c). After the data quality measurements have been made in RIS, the institutions must review their measurement results. With the help of data profiling, causes of quality problems can be revealed (Azeroual, et al. 2018b). This data analysis and its methods are used to better understand the structure, relationships and content of different data sources in RIS and to detect and automatically correct potential errors (Azeroual, et al. 2018b). Data profiling is considered an important component in analyzing and improving data quality before data can be integrated into RIS (Azeroual, et al. 2018b). The institutions and libraries must use data profiling as early as possible to get an accurate picture of the state of their data. Because data profiling is the foundation for planning the most meaningful approach to correcting and harmonizing information assets.

Data cleansing can correct the identified issues (incomplete, incorrect, inconsistent, etc.) to increase the informational value and usefulness of the research information (Azeroual, et al. 2018a, d) (Azeroual and Abuosba, 2017). Using data cleansing methods and technologies such as parsing, standardization, enrichment, matching, and merging within the data cleansing process will liquidate data integration issues in RIS (Azeroual and Abuosba, 2017) (Azeroual, et al. 2018a, d). As these methods are essential for achieving and maintaining maximum data quality for more success in RIS (Azeroual, et al. 2018a, d).

If a certain data quality has been achieved, it should be preserved as long as possible. During monitoring, therefore, the data is continuously checked before being stored in the RIS because the data is constantly changing. Such long-term continuous assurance, enhancement and increase of data quality in RIS requires specific measures such as "laissez-faire", "re-active approach" and "pro-active approach" (Azeroual, et al. 2018a, d). At certain intervals, a periodic check of the entire research data should take place again and again. Even if no mistakes are made in the input of research information into RIS, relocations, mergers and other factors repeatedly result in changes to the data. Therefore, only through a permanent data control, the device is able to provide anytime information about their data quality status, as well as to increase confidence in the existing data.

To successfully ensure data quality, institutions and libraries must find a methodology and solution that includes all three key components: data analysis, data cleansing and data control. By combining this sophisticated methodology with their appropriate technology, data quality in RIS is significantly improved and increased. This will lead to sound decisions not only for information purposes and reporting but also for the creation of the information value. Than both are based on the availability of high quality data.

## **7 Conclusion**

Text data mining has become progressively important as a scientific method in recent years and its potential is very high. On the one hand, most of the information is in text form and on the other, knowledge and information

about research activities play a very important role in the success of an institution. The automated acquisition of research information and the associated advent of vast amounts of data make automated data analysis necessary in many areas. Likewise, the steady growth of scientific activities (such as publications, projects, etc.) and information is making computer-aided techniques of classification, clustering, NLP, information extraction, and information retrieval increasingly important. Text data mining techniques can be actively used not only by institutions, but also actively by libraries to improve their services or to develop new services. In addition, more and more tools are being developed to make the relatively complicated process of text data mining and the associated advantages usable for users without appropriate text data mining knowledge. However, a minimum level of knowledge in the area of databases is also necessary.

In summary, one can say that text analytic methods or text data mining techniques are today a component of advanced method development in institutions and libraries. The application and further development of such methods or techniques allows a long-term cost savings in the processing of service projects, addressing the increased expectations of scientific and scientific actors in the context of the establishment of open data, open science and big data, increasing the quality of research projects and the reuse already manually processed text corpora as training data of adaptive algorithms.

When research activities by institutions and libraries are mis-captured and entered into RIS, and changes and updates occur daily in the dataset, then here is the solution, a permanent and controlled process cycle (data analysis, data cleansing and data monitoring) and continuous quality management to detect and correct errors. The subject of data quality should therefore be treated as a high priority business process to guarantee and increase the value proposition of the research information produced, especially in the new environment of open science, and to reduce the efforts of the staff and to save the costs of the institutions.

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