Highlights from the "Advancing FAIR and Go FAIR in the U.S." Workshop

I attended the "Advancing FAIR and Go FAIR in the U.S." workshop in February; the workshop covered topics on how to establish and promote FAIR culture and capabilities within a community. Many of the discussions were synergistic with the CDI activities, so I wanted to share some key points from the workshop with the CDI community. - Sophie Hou

(Logo from the Go FAIR Initiative)

Workshop Info

Title: Advancing FAIR and Go FAIR in the U.S.

Date: February 24th to 27th, 2020

Location: Atlanta, Georgia

Goals:

- Facilitate development of a community of practice for FAIR awareness and capacity-building in the US
- Improve understanding of FAIR technologies, and how to teach this to others
- Preparation for teaching or supporting FAIR data management and policies for researchers, local institutions, professional organizations, and others

Link: https://www.sdsc.edu/services/data_science/research_data_services.html

Overall Summary:

- The workshop highlighted that advancing FAIR requires communal effort.
- In order to "FAIRify," it is important for a community to first determine its scope, goals, and objectives.

Key Notes:

- FAIR is an acronym from Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable.
- Typical challenges that a community could face when working on FAIR include:
    - Knowledge gap
    - Institutional inertia
    - Community relationship building
    - Expanding FAIR capacity
    - Best way to adapt and adopt available FAIR resources
- The ultimate goal of enabling FAIR is to allow both humans and machines (especially machines) to use digital resources, so that analytics and re-use can be optimized.
    - According to the Go FAIR Initiative (https://www.go-fair.org), FAIR can also be understood as **F**ully **AI R**eady. In other words, machines are able to know what the digital resources mean. Additionally, the digital resources are as distributed/open as possible, but can also be as central/closed as needed.
- Implementation of FAIR can be challenging because many concepts in the principles are multifaceted (including social, resource, and technical considerations).
- In order to advance FAIR, it is important to first establish a good (common) understanding of the FAIR principles.
- FAIR requires technical and disciplinary resources, but it also requires community support.
    - When implement FAIR, we need to review choices and accept challenges; e.g. who is our "community", and determine what is specific to our "community".
    - FAIR is not a "standard". The local community context is important and necessary.
- The Go FAIR Initiative offers a 7-step "FAIRification" process: https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/fairification-process/
- Options for conducting a FAIR event/activity with one's community include:
    - Multiple day, experts convening, tutorial/webinar, conference, unconference, hackathon, symposium, sprint, posters, etc.
- Participants of an FAIR event/actiity might have the following expectations:
    - Share best practices/resources/learn new skills
    - Tackle a problem
    - Learn new concepts/skills
    - Use FAIR as a them to track for other topics
    - Collaborate to create a resource to be shared
    - And more!
- Once a community has established its version of FAIR, it is important to connect with other communities. Convergence with different communities is key to grow FAIR.