Henrik Schönemann: „As researchers, we often say, 'we need the data.' Today, the data needs us." – Safeguarding Research & Culture (SRC)

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IZD2MCM Cookie Talks

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Under the thought-provoking title "As researchers, we often say, 'we need the data.' Today, the data needs us. - Kathy Reid", Henrik Schönemann reflected on the growing responsibility of researchers in safeguarding both scientific and cultural resources. **Safeguarding Research & Culture (SRC)**, an international volunteer-based project, has been working on creating and disseminating backups of public (research) data under threat of deletion or other ways inaccessibility. The project was sparked by the ongoing political attacks against research and its funding by the current US administration, which brought people from many different backgrounds together and showed a timely need for solutions beyond relying on traditional data repositories. The **SRC** is working with other groups to safeguard as much threatened public data as possible while also trying to establish an alternative model to traditional centralized storage solutions. Using a distributed approach to storing data that allows anyone to contribute parts of their own hardware and internet connection (based on the BitTorrent-protocol), they managed to reach a storage network with a sustained capacity upwards of 700TB.

Henrik Schönemann initiated what later became SRC in mid-January of this year. Working from Germany, he is part of the core-team behind SRC, mostly keeping in touch with other groups to coordinate ongoing safeguarding efforts as well as doing outreach about the general issues facing researchers and research institution and the particular practices of SRC. He warned against historical and contemporary forms of knowledge destruction and the erasure of cultural heritage that does not align with prevailing societal expectations. In times of weakening institutional trust, Schönemann argued, it becomes crucial for scholars and cultural practitioners themselves to take action—beyond formal frameworks and regulations. Diversity, individual initiative, and collective commitment are essential for the common good.

Henrik Schönemann's Cookie Talk was a powerful reminder of how scientific inquiry and cultural responsibility are deeply intertwined. His appeal— "Today, the data needs us"—urges researchers to move beyond simply accessing data, toward actively protecting and sustaining the conditions of knowledge production.

For more information on the Project: **https://safeguar.de** & **https://sciop.net** (data catalog).

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