



**COVID-END**

COVID-19 Evidence Network  
to support Decision-making

# COVID-END Digitizing WG update: Summary of discussions and potential directions

11 June 2020

## Background: Principles

- Digitizing working group has been discussing opportunities to collectively develop unique solutions within the context of four broad principles:
  1. Start by listening to what COVID-END WGs are asking for
  2. Prioritize 'win-win' scenarios among repository owners
  3. Prioritize low tech and/or low cost solutions (in the absence of \$\$)
  4. Commit to open sharing of COVID-related data and resources

## Background: Requests from other WG

- The Digitizing WG has heard, in general terms, the following requests:
  1. We want to search a **single source**
  2. We want to search a source that supports **identifying decision-relevant information**
  3. We want to search a source that **includes all of the decision-relevant document types** we may need

# Status of responding to WG requests (1)

## Request 1: **Search single source**

- **Proposals received:** Single, federated search repository
  - **Facilitators**
    - Technically possible/many opportunities for operationalization
    - General willingness among repository owners to consider ‘win-win’ scenarios for sharing their COVID-19 relevant data
  - **Potential barriers**
    - Time, resources, need for standard data format and incentives for owners of repositories to share (for free) their data and metadata
    - Trust among target users
  - **‘Bridging work’ already in progress** among Digitizing WG members
    - Pilot ‘enhance RIS file’ (Epistemonikos, McMaster PLUS, Cochrane)
    - COKA = open access standardization of data for COVID-19 knowledge and sharing across platforms (any software solution could pull from it)

# Status of responding to WG requests (2)

## Request 2: **Easy identification of decision-relevant information**

- **Proposals received:** 1) common taxonomy; 2) quality appraisal & time stamps
  - **Facilitators:**
    - Taxonomy development already underway
      - COVID-END has a decision-maker relevant taxonomy
      - Other repositories have their own taxonomies for different audiences
      - Willingness among owners to share metadata for COVID-19 resources can enable quick mapping of taxonomies across documents and platforms (RIS pilot/COKA will help)
    - Many available approaches for quality appraisal that could be adopted (and adapted), time data (e.g., last year searched) readily available
  - **Potential barriers:** Reaching consensus on taxonomy(ies), appraisal, and who does the manual work if needed (e.g., tagging articles with taxonomy categories, search date)

# Status of responding to WG requests (3)

## Request 3: **All decision-relevant document types**

- **Proposals received:**
  - Documents indexed in bibliographic databases (e.g., published guidance/guidelines, overviews, reviews, single studies, protocols)
  - Expansion to sources not indexed (e.g., guidance and guidelines from organizational websites, rapid reviews and other synthesis products)
- **Facilitators:**
  - The ‘bread and butter’ of those engaged in the Digitizing WG, with COKA available to support standardization of resources that aren’t currently indexed, and several ways to share data
- **Potential barriers:**
  - Time and resources to do manual searching, identification and extraction of data for non-indexed sources

# Final thoughts

## Any solution needs to be...

- Technically feasible (all of the proposals are)
- Economically viable
  - Funds needed, but low-cost alternatives are also available
  - Needs to complement, not threaten, existing business models of existing repositories (it costs money to run the services that we want to pull together, and if we build on them, we shall ensure they remains sustainable)
- Based on sound assumptions, and with strong plans to overcome any implementation challenges
  - E.g., Will synthesizers change their behaviour and be willing (and trusting enough) to put faith in one single repository? How can we create trust to ensure this is the case?
- **Aware of and planning for post-COVID opportunities (e.g., targeted collaborations that help create similar win-win scenarios for other priority issues)**