



UK Research
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Data-driven change

What is a trusted research environment (TRE)?

DARE UK Public Dialogue – Initial workshops, January 2022

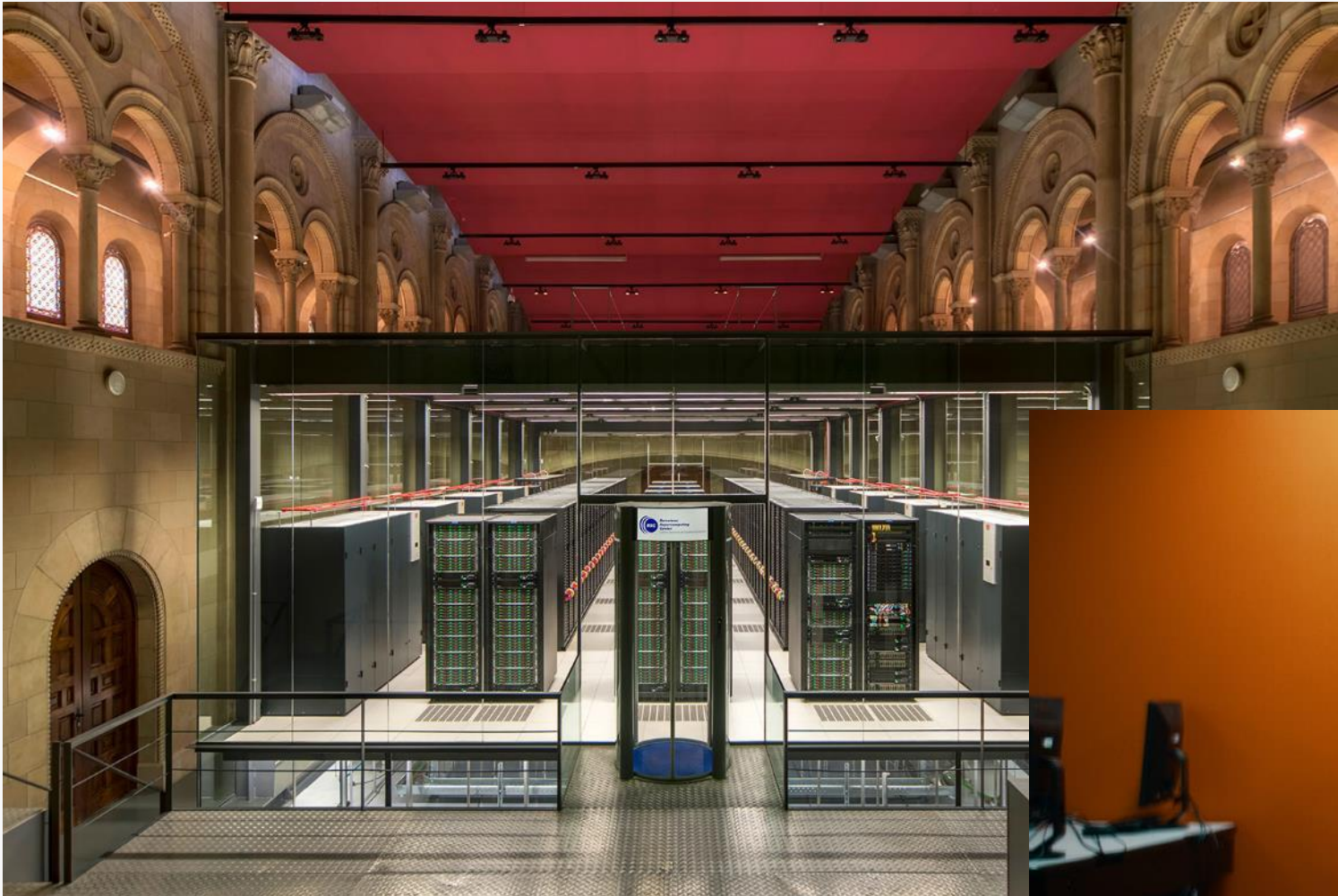
What?

A trusted research environment (TRE) is a **secure digital system** that holds and provides access to **sensitive data** for approved researchers.



How?

- TREs hold **sensitive research data** from a range of different sectors, for example from the health and education records of members of the public
- The data is securely accessed by **approved researchers** in a de-identified form, either in a secure physical room at the TRE offices, or via a secure connection to the system
- The data **stays securely** in the TRE and is not download to the researcher's own system
- Any results that the researcher wishes to export (e.g. graphs or tables) **are checked** before the researcher is permitted to export them from the TRE



Secure, controlled research environment

Data centre – Compute Servers, Data Storage,
Networking



How?

- A formal application must be made to view the data, and only for research in the **public interest**
- **There isn't one TRE for all of the UK** – there are multiple TREs across the four nations
- Currently, there are **varying standards and processes** in place across the UK's TREs – DARE UK wants to fix this
- It is sometimes difficult

TREs operate in line with the 'Five Safes'

Safe people: Only approved researchers are granted access to data.

Safe projects: Data is only made accessible for projects in the public interest.

Safe output: All research findings are checked by TRE staff, with any potentially identifying information removed.



Safe settings: Data is accessed by researchers in a secure room or via an approved, remote connection to one.

Safe data: Data is de-identified, and only data that's really needed for the project is made accessible.

Can my data be identified in TREs? Is my data secure?



- Data held in TREs is **de-identified**
- Data can not be **downloaded** from the TRE
- There are multiple **security processes** in place to prevent your data being identified or misused
- TRE staff have to comply to **strict rules and standards** set by the relevant national legal and regulatory bodies in each nation
- Researchers also have to be **approved** to access data

Why TREs important?



- They make data research **safer**
- They enable **collaboration**
- They make data research **more efficient, sustainable and cost-effective**

What are the limitations of TREs?

- Not all TREs have the same processes and standards
- They are **not connected to each other**, making research using data held in different TREs tricky, for example across the four nations of the UK
- **Not all** existing data is available for research
- There may be limitations on the **capacity of TREs**
- Strong restrictions can sometimes **hinder** research



DARE UK wants to reduce these limitations.



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Questions.