



Online Ethics Center  
FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

# Risks to the Data

## Author(s)

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## Year

2000

## Description

A scenario meant to stimulate discussion about how to protect the data in a research lab.

## Body

You are a new faculty member at Big U and are setting up your lab. Following the practice of your own thesis supervisor and remembering stories of lab data that was lost or accidentally destroyed when people took data out of lab, you plan to have all of your lab members record their observations in a bound lab notebook that is chained to the lab bench. One of your new colleagues points out to you that the experiments being done in the lab just below yours involve many combustibles and that lab has had several fires in the last five years. One was serious enough to damage the laboratory space you now occupy. Your colleague suggests that you make it easier to quickly remove the data in case of fire in your absence, and even to consider removing the lab notebook, when no one is working in the lab.

What do you do?

## Notes

Caroline Whitbeck introduced methods and modules for discussing numerous issues in responsible conduct of research at a Sigma Xi Forum in 2000. Partial funding for the development of this material came from an NIH grant. You can find the entire sequence on the OEC at [Scenarios for Ethics Modules in the Responsible Conduct of Research](#).

Some information in these historical modules may be out-of-date; for instance, there may be a new edition of the professional society's code that is referred to in an item. If you have suggestions for updates, please contact the OEC.

**Contributor(s)**

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**Resource Type**

Open-ended scenario

**Parent Collection**

Scenarios for Ethics Modules in the Responsible Conduct of Research

**Topics**

Data Management

Research and Practice

**Discipline(s)**

Research Ethics

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