

# Readme (PLEASE) – introduction

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Ministry of Education,  
Youth and Sports  
of the Czech Republic

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# Program



README FILE HISTORY



USABILITY AND EXAMPLES  
– FOR DATA STEWARDS



README FILES PROJECT  
COLLECTIVE OF DATA STEWARDS  
[UNDER NRP].



LIVE TESTING OF  
THE FIRST TEMPLATE

Have you ever seen a README file?

Have you ever created a README file?

# README file history

# README looks

A simple file with descriptive information.

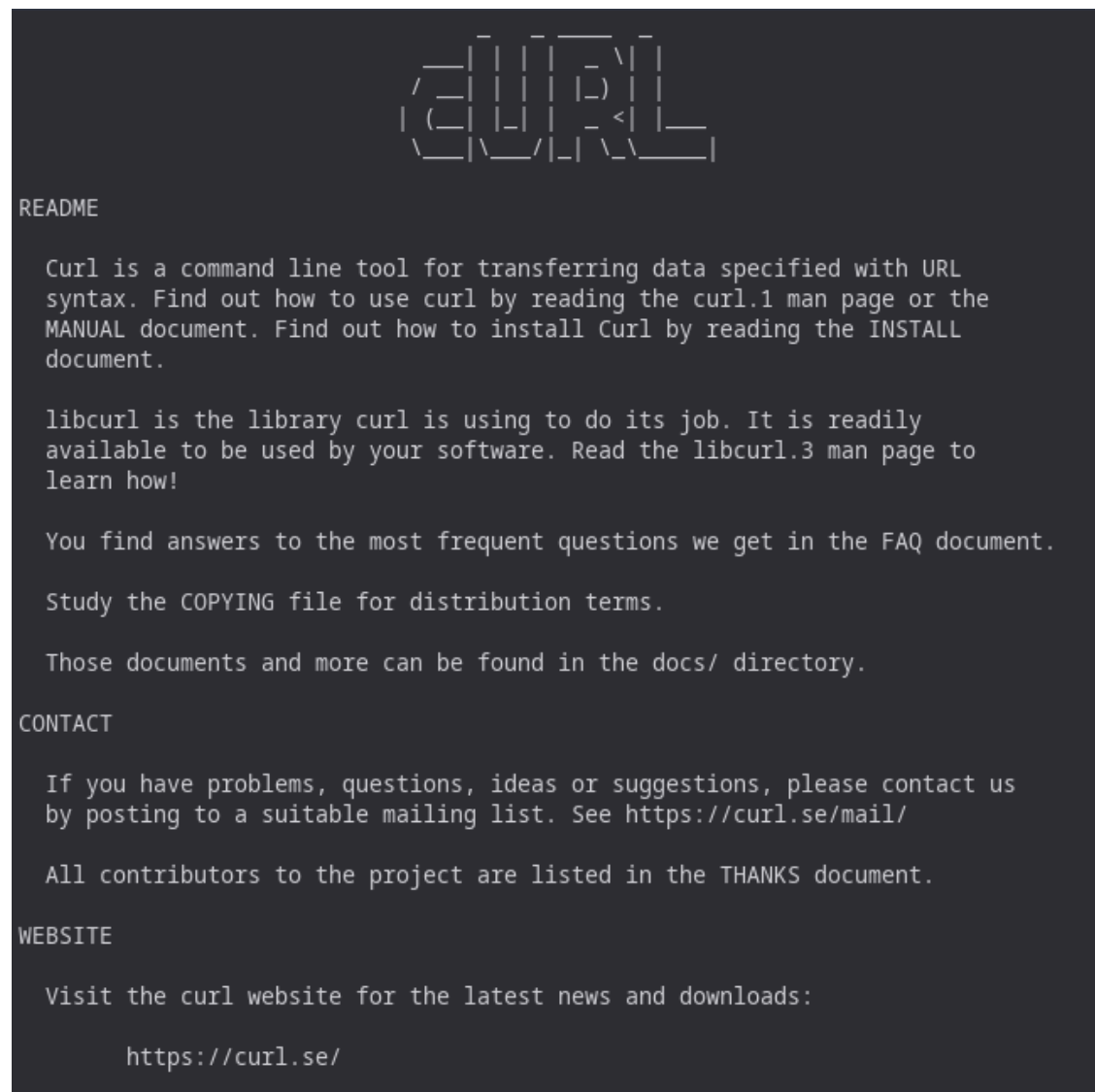
Contains usually:

**What do to**

**How to do it**

**What not to do**

**Who to contact**

A screenshot of a README file for the curl project. At the top, the word "curl" is displayed in a large, stylized, monospaced font. Below it, the word "README" is written in a smaller, plain font. The main body of the text is in a monospaced font and contains several paragraphs of instructions and information. The text is as follows:

```
curl

README

Curl is a command line tool for transferring data specified with URL
syntax. Find out how to use curl by reading the curl.1 man page or the
MANUAL document. Find out how to install Curl by reading the INSTALL
document.

libcurl is the library curl is using to do its job. It is readily
available to be used by your software. Read the libcurl.3 man page to
learn how!

You find answers to the most frequent questions we get in the FAQ document.

Study the COPYING file for distribution terms.

Those documents and more can be found in the docs/ directory.

CONTACT

If you have problems, questions, ideas or suggestions, please contact us
by posting to a suitable mailing list. See https://curl.se/mail/

All contributors to the project are listed in the THANKS document.

WEBSITE

Visit the curl website for the latest news and downloads:

https://curl.se/
```

# Common contents

- Configuration
- Installation
- Operating
- A file manifest (a list of files)
- Copyright - licensing
- Contact information
- A list of known bugs
- Troubleshooting instructions
- Credits and acknowledgments
- A changelog (fellow programmers)
- A news section (end users)<sup>[2]</sup>

A README is more likely to contain  
**user-oriented** material:

- last-minute documentation changes
  - error workarounds
  - other restrictions...

*[as explained by the Jargon file]<sup>[3]</sup>*

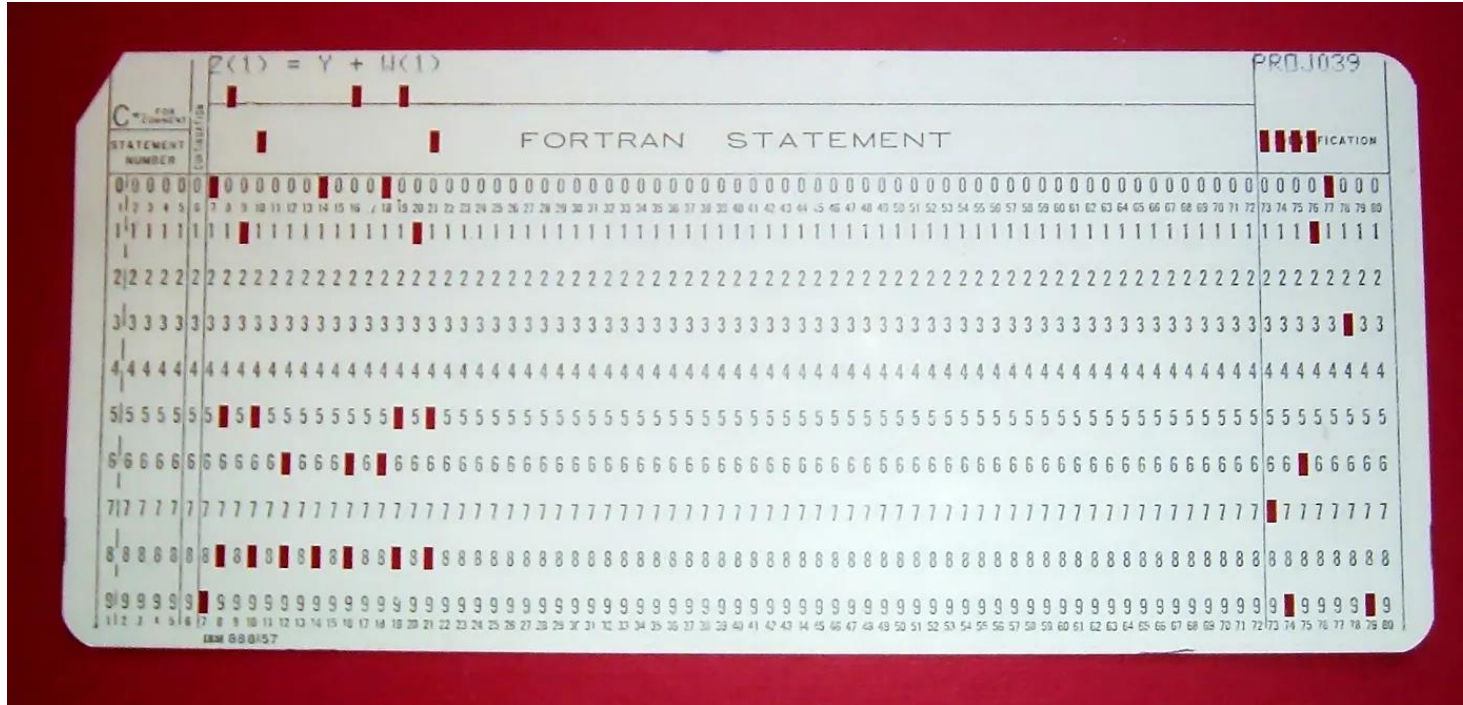
# Where did we come from, where do we go?

- ~1970s: the first known readme files are found
- Ashley Grayson 27-NOV-74
- William J. Earl, 27 March 1975
  
- Discussions online talk about possible start earlier..
- Real life printed READMEs are said to have been used to learn how to use punch cards. [\[4\]](#)

# Punch cards? For data? Yes!

- Magnetic tapes for data coming around ~1950s [5,8,12]
- Magnetic tapes were already around by '28 but were starting to be used by '51 for the Mauchly-Eckert UNIVAC I computer [7,9]
- Before: data were saved in punch cards which would be read by the punch card readers which you transfer that information to computer systems and vice versa [6]
- Computer card readers: input 100 to 1000 cards/min! [5,10]

# Punch cards? For data? Yes!



Fortran punch card (Arnold Reinhold, 2006, CC BY-SA 2.5) [11]

# Punch cards? For data? Yes!

- Punched cards already established in 1890s for other purposes.
- “a stiff paper-based medium used to store digital information via the presence or absence of holes in predefined positions.” [5]
- “IBM Computer Card” - 1928.
- “IBM cards” with 12 rows, 80 lines of holes [12]
- By 1950s IBM was producing a great part of their earnings through punch card productions .
- “Their legacy persists in modern computing, influencing the 80-character line standard still present in some command-line interfaces and programming environments.” [5]

# [README.TXT is the DOC file for SPICE/SINC/SLIC] Ashley Grayson 27-NOV-74 [14]

## [README.TXT is the DOC file for SPICE/SINC/SLIC]

This failsafe tape contains the circuit analysis programs:

SPICE SINC and SLIC

described in the Applications Software Bulletin Volume 4.

### requirements:

SPICE [...] core.

**Note:** at one time there was a hacked up version of F10

version 1 which was able to compile SPICE. It was only

guaranteed to compile the version of SPICE on this tape and

had many severe bugs. With this distribution I will no

longer make any attempt to distribute that compiler nor

answer any questions on it. -ADG

### Performance:

Of the three programs, [...] while

running the test data:

phys page limit	cpu seconds
94 p	16.2
85 p	22
80 p - 45 p	25
40 p	127
10 p	over 6 min.

I/O units

SPICE reads via 'DIALOG', writes SPCOUT.DAT

SINC reads 1, writes 6

SLIC reads 5, writes 6 and 2

**This failsafe tape contains files named after the programs**

with extensions:

FOR - the source program

IN - a test problem

OUT - sample output

SAV - the 1070 optimized core image

**it also includes this file, the FOROTS to go with the SAVes and the source for SECOND.MAC, the timing routine. SPICE is broken into three parts: 1SPICE.FOR, 2 and 3.**

**There is a printed document to describe each of the programs.** These are included in the DECUS packet. The documentation and programs were originally developed by the E.E. department of the Univ. of Calif. at Berkley on a CDC 6400. Except to convert the FORTRAN to the DECsystem-10 no changes have been made to the programs. For the test data SLIC and SINC have shown a slight variation with respect to the 6400, SPICE shows no variation.

**Good luck!**

**Ashley Grayson 27-NOV-74**

[end of README.TXT]

# Random Notes

## William J. Earl, 27 March 1975 [16]

### UCI LISP

#### Random Notes

The files on this FAILSAFE tape constitute the UCI LISP system. They are for the most part documented in the UCI LISP Manual, available from the Department of Information and Computer Science at the University of California, Irvine, California. There are a few minor points which should be noted, particularly by any systems programmers charged with modifications to this system.

- 1) The file "EDITST.LAP" contains a hand-patched version of the compiled LISP code for the function "EDIT\*", a part of the UCI LISP Editor. [Due to a bug in the compiler](#), this function does not compile

correctly. If the file "EDIT.COM" is recompiled, the former file must be edited into it, replacing the code produced by the compiler (this has already been done in the version supplied).

- 2) [The system as supplied is set up to handle only standard DEC numeric project-programmer numbers \(PPN's\)](#); if your system has other types of PPN's, you will have to change the code in the function "CNVPPN" (in the file "UCILSP.MAC") to recognize them, and reassemble that file. [...]
- 4) **The ".DOC" files supplied constitute the UCI LISP manual, in upper-case only, ascii format.** The

manual is available in a much more readable upper and lower case format as noted above.

**Should problems arise with this system, please communicate them to the Department of Information and Computer Science at UCI; they will be directed to whomever is currently managing the UCI LISP system.**

**William J. Earl**

**Department of Information and Computer Science  
University of California  
Irvine, California**

**27 March 1975**

# Why README and not readME?

- “By ancient tradition, **real source files** have **all-lowercase names** and **all-uppercase** is reserved for **metadata**, comments, and graffiti. [17]
- Because 'A' sorts before 'a' in **ASCII**, the **README will appear** in directory listings **before any source file**. [17]

# Usability & Examples

# Awesome README

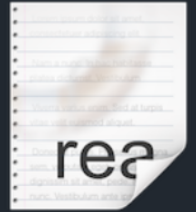
- A curated list of READMEs that are worth mentioning
- Either templates or simply the readmes themselves

## Awesome README

A curated list of awesome READMEs

Elements in beautiful READMEs include, but are not limited to:

images, screenshots, GIFs, text formatting, etc.



### Examples

- [Abblix/Oidc.Server](#) - Project banner with informative badges. Clear project description, certification details with informative tables, and unicode icons. Detailed installation guide, links to comprehensive documentation and a getting started guide, and licensing information. Easy navigation with a table of contents for quick access to all sections.
- [ai/size-limit](#) - Project logo, clear description, screenshot, step-by-step installing instructions.
- [aimeos/aimeos-typo3](#) - Project logo. Clear description of what the project does. Demo screenshot. TOC for easy navigation. Easy installation and setup sections with screenshots. Links for further reading.
- [alichtman/shallow-backup](#) - Clear description of what the project does. GIF Demo. TOC for easy navigation. Badges. Links for further reading. Simple install instructions.
- [alichtman/stronghold](#) - Project logo. Clear description of what the project does. GIF Demo. TOC for easy navigation. Badges. Links for further reading. Simple install instructions.
- [amitmerchant1990/electron-markdownify](#) - Project logo. Minimalist description of what it is. GIF demo of the project. Key features. How to install guide. Credits.
- [amplication/amplication](#) - Clear project logo. Brief explanation. All features explained. Clean documentation. Useful links (website, docs, discord). List of contributors with their pictures and usernames.
- [ankitwasankar/mftool-java](#) - Project logo with a short display of what can be achieved with it, TOC for easy navigation, important badges, clean installation guide, and multiple code snippets showing how to use the functionality.
- [AntonioFalcaoJr/EventualShop](#) - The project has a logo and well-defined sections such as: information about the project, the architectural solution, along with reference links such as articles, videos, and documentation. It explains how to run the project in different environments (development and production). It has documented load tests, it also describes which technologies are used, and it has diagrams for the archetype.

# HTMLHint

One of the awesome readmes

**HTMLHint**  
Static analysis for HTML.  
40+ battle-tested rules · CLI & API.  
npm htmlhint MIT

```
~/site > htmlhint index.html  
Scanning...  
x L2:3 tagname-lowercase Tag [ HEAD ] must be lowercase.  
x L3:1 doctype-first Doctype must be declared first.
```

## HTMLHint

The static code analysis tool you need for your HTML.

npm v1.9.2 openssf best practices passing downloads 845k/month license MIT

[How To Use](#) · [Contributing](#) · [Website](#)

### Table of Contents

- [Installation and Usage](#)
  - [Local Installation and Usage](#)
  - [Global Installation and Usage](#)
- [Example output](#)
- [Configuration](#)
- [Docs](#)

### Installation and Usage

HTMLHint requires [Node.js](#) 20 or later.

There are two ways to install HTMLHint: globally and locally.

# Art of README

## **No README? No abstraction**

- No README means developers will need to investigate your code in order to understand it.

## **Care about people's time**

- Think about it: your job, when you're doing it with optimal altruism in mind, isn't to "sell" people on your work. It's to let them evaluate what your creation does as objectively as possible, and decide whether it meets their needs or not -- not to, say, maximize your downloads or userbase.

# Readme Best Practices

## Readme Best Practices

A place to copy-paste your README.md from

readme-best-practices > a place to copy-paste your README.md from STEP 01 / 04

### The hardest file to write is the **empty** one.

YOUR-AWESOME-PROJECT/

- src/
  - └ index.js
  - └ cli.js
- tests/
  - └ index.test.js
- package.json
- LICENSE
- README.md empty

README.MD 0 lines · markdown

- ? What does it do?
- ? How do I install it?
- ? How do I configure it?
- ? How can people contribute?
- ? What's the license?

One of the most crucial things in your open-source project is the `README.md` file. This repository has a ready-to-copy-paste template you can use for all your projects.

### Getting started

Copy the `README-default.md` file for yourself and start editing! At the root of your project, run:

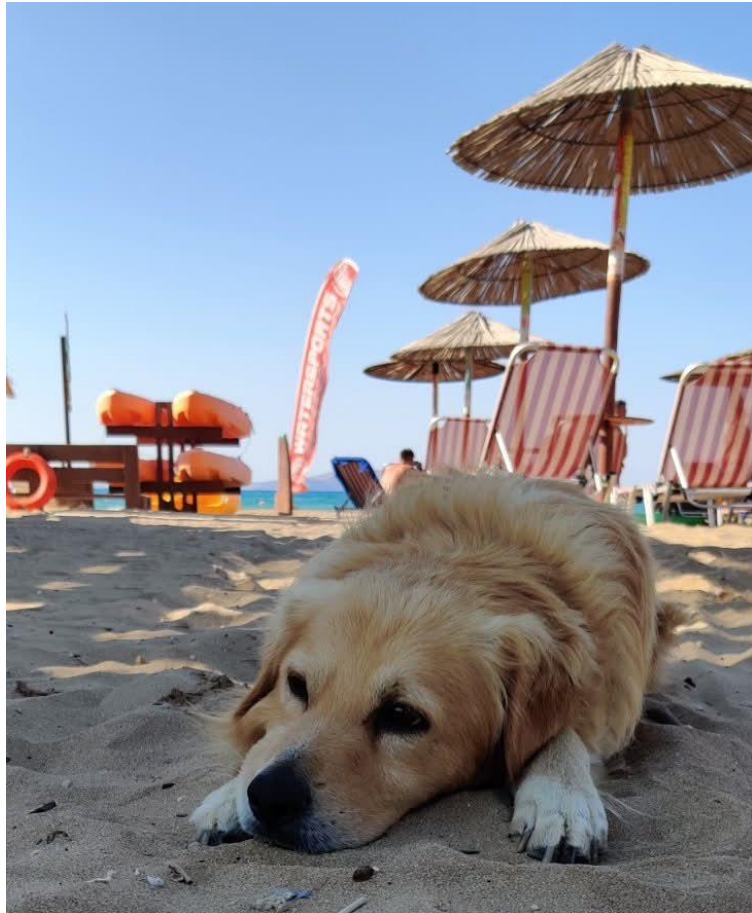
```
curl https://raw.githubusercontent.com/jehna/readme-best-practices/master/README-default.md > README.md
```

The code above fetches the `README-default.md` file from this repository and renames it to `README.md`.

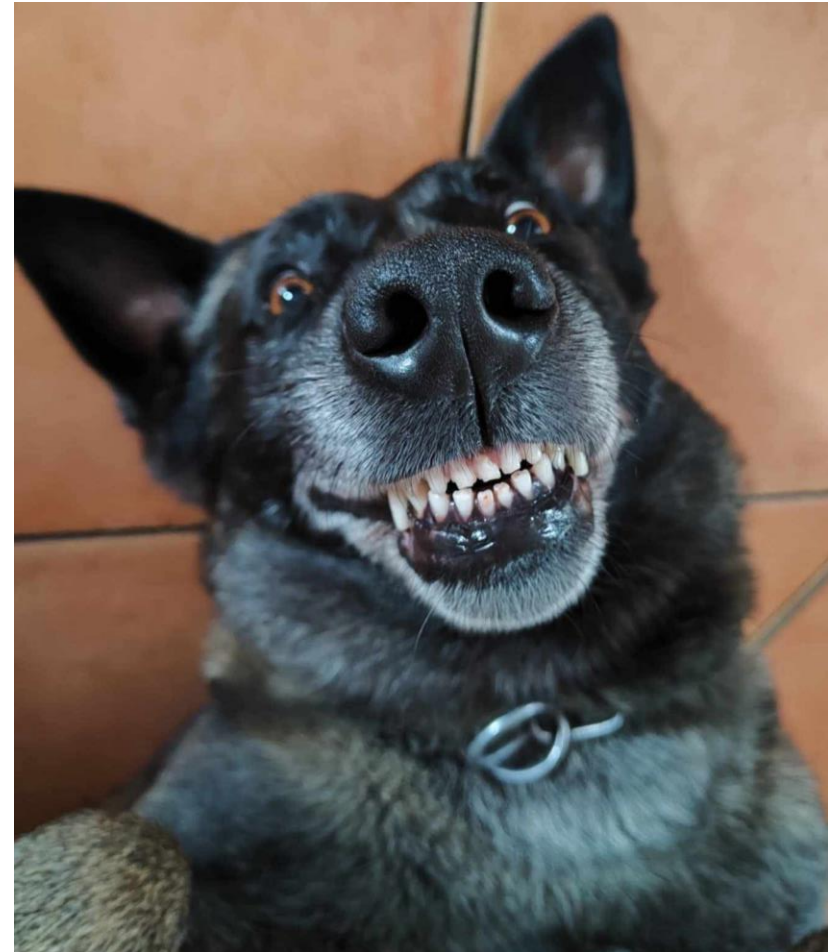
### Fill with your own text

The default template has some guiding text to get you started. However, you'll need to edit the file with your own text to use it with your project.

But are all READMEs only for software  
precious?



No! README files are now a standard practice for datasets too!



# README minimal information

## General information

- Provide a title for the dataset
- Name/institution/address/email information for
  - Principal investigator (or person responsible for collecting the data)
- Date of data collection (can be a single date, or a range)
- Information about geographic location of data collection

## Data and file overview

- For each filename, a short description of what data it contains
- Date that the file was created

## Sharing and access information

- Licenses or restrictions placed on the data

## Methodological information

- Description of methods for data collection or generation
- Description of methods used for data processing
- Any software or instrument-specific information needed to understand or interpret the data, including software and hardware version numbers
  - When to use a Data README vs. a Software README
    - Data README
    - Software README: See the [guide for writing readmes for research code and software](#)

## Data-specific information

- Variable list, including full names and definitions (spell out abbreviated words) of column headings for tabular data
- Units of measurement
- Definitions for codes or symbols used to record missing data

# Describe your dataset in a README file

A README is a documentation file that helps others **interpret** and **reanalyze** your data.

## Details to include:

- **Summary** of experimental efforts underlying this dataset
- Description of file **structure** and contents
- **Definitions** of all variables, abbreviations, missing data codes, and units
- **Links** to other publicly accessible locations of the data
- Other **sources**, if any, that the data was derived from
- Any other details that may influence **reuse** or replication efforts

# Describe your dataset in a README file

A README is a documentation file that helps others **interpret** and **reanalyze** your data.

Details **not** to include:

- **Author names**, or any other potentially **identifying information**, **if** the data is being submitted to a journal with a **double-anonymous review** process in place.

# README FILES PROJECT COLLECTIVE OF DATA STEWARDS NRP

# README files project

## What is the Collective of Data Stewards?

It is the team of people from the Czech Data Stewards Community working on the readme project and dedicate their time to produce valuable works for all of us.

What do they do:

- Create, edit + review the readme template
- Add discipline specific examples to each template

# Disciplines for README examples

1	Discipline (81)	Category (6)
2	Applied Cryptology	Engineering & Technology
3	Artificial Intelligence	Engineering & Technology
4	Chemical Engineering	Engineering & Technology
5	Cyber-Physical Systems	Engineering & Technology
6	Cybersecurity	Engineering & Technology
7	Data Science	Engineering & Technology
8	Geotechnics	Engineering & Technology
9	Hydrology and Water Management	Engineering & Technology
10	Mechatronics	Engineering & Technology
11	Stringology	Engineering & Technology
12	Waste Management and Circular Economy	Engineering & Technology
13	BioImage Analysis	Engineering & Technology
14	Bioimaging	Engineering & Technology
15	Bioengineering	Engineering & Technology
16	Archaeology	Humanities & Arts
17	Archival Science and Digital Curation	Humanities & Arts
18	Cultural Anthropology	Humanities & Arts
19	Digital Art History	Humanities & Arts
20	Digital Humanities	Humanities & Arts
21	Egyptology	Humanities & Arts
22	Ethnomusicology	Humanities & Arts
23	Linguistics and Corpus Linguistics	Humanities & Arts
24	Philosophy of Science	Humanities & Arts
25	Philosophy	Humanities & Arts
26	History	Humanities & Arts
27	Business Informatics	Information, Management & Ethics
28	Ethics of Technology	Information, Management & Ethics
29	Forestry and Wood Sciences	Information, Management & Ethics
30	Geospatial Science (GIS)	Information, Management & Ethics
31	Information and Knowledge Management	Information, Management & Ethics

32	Animal Science	Life Sciences & Medicine
33	Bioinformatics	Life Sciences & Medicine
34	Biotechnology	Life Sciences & Medicine
35	Ecology	Life Sciences & Medicine
36	Entomology	Life Sciences & Medicine
37	Epidemiology	Life Sciences & Medicine
38	Experimental Botany	Life Sciences & Medicine
39	Genomics	Life Sciences & Medicine
40	Hydrobiology	Life Sciences & Medicine
41	Medical Imaging	Life Sciences & Medicine
42	Medical Informatics	Life Sciences & Medicine
43	Microbiology	Life Sciences & Medicine
44	Molecular Biology	Life Sciences & Medicine
45	Neuroscience	Life Sciences & Medicine
46	Oncology Research	Life Sciences & Medicine
47	Parasitology	Life Sciences & Medicine
48	Plant Molecular Biology	Life Sciences & Medicine
49	Pharmacology	Life Sciences & Medicine
50	Plant Physiology	Life Sciences & Medicine
51	Psychology	Life Sciences & Medicine
52	Soil Science	Life Sciences & Medicine
53	Toxicology	Life Sciences & Medicine
54	Structural Biology	Life Sciences & Medicine
55	Chemical Risk Assessment	Life Sciences & Medicine
56	Exposome	Life Sciences & Medicine
57	Environmental Monitoring	Life Sciences & Medicine
58	Environmental Chemistry	Life Sciences & Medicine
59	Astronomy	Physical Sciences & Mathematics
60	Biophysics	Physical Sciences & Mathematics
61	Chemical Technology	Physical Sciences & Mathematics
62	Chemistry	Physical Sciences & Mathematics
63	Climate Science	Physical Sciences & Mathematics
64	Computational Chemistry	Physical Sciences & Mathematics
65	Cryogenics	Physical Sciences & Mathematics
66	Materials Science	Physical Sciences & Mathematics
67	Metallurgy and Materials Engineering	Physical Sciences & Mathematics
68	Nanotechnology	Physical Sciences & Mathematics
69	Nuclear and Particle Physics	Physical Sciences & Mathematics

# README files project

## Finalized parts:

Template for README files available in:

- Text
- Markdown
- JSON

## To be done:

- Addition of discipline specific examples
- Review + editing
- Publication of the whole collection

# README files project

```
LICENSE Notice for the README file template and examples

This README template containing examples is authored by the Collective of Data Stewards of the Czech Data Stewards Community and is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

This template was based on the README Template Suite for Archaeology created by Tobias Kolmacker (ORCID: 0009-0006-7760-7320) and developed to support researchers and data stewards in creating a README for their datasets.

This template aims to help you create a README for your data. Fill in only the sections that are relevant to your dataset; delete the rest.

GUIDELINES

Anything inside brackets [ ] is an example and should be replaced with real answers or be deleted.
The symbol > signifies comments to the user, and should be deleted after the README is filled.
The symbols - - - signify separation of sections and do not need to be deleted.
The README file name starts with an underscore _ in order to make it appear first in the list of files, when sorted alphabetically.
This file is using markdown. By changing the blank lines, symbols and spaces you can break the format. If you wish to keep the file only as a text file this does not apply.
After filling in the README you can delete the first page with instructions.

YOUR TEMPLATE STARTS HERE

Specific discipline examples of this file: [add discipline]
|

DATASET NAME: [Data name]

BASIC INFORMATION

Author(s):
[First name, last name, ORCID;
First name, last name, ORCID]

Main contact: email@example.cz
Dataset license: [CC-BY 4.0]
README version: [_README_v1-0]
PID: https://doi.org/xxxxxxxxx
Project website: https://bestproject.cz
```

Simple text

# README files project

## LICENSE Notice for the README file template and examples

This README template containing examples is authored by the Collective of Data Stewards of the Czech Data Stewards Community and is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). The full list of authors can be found here: [https://github.com/Czech-Data-Steward-Community/README\\_FILES/blob/main/Collective\\_datastewards.md](https://github.com/Czech-Data-Steward-Community/README_FILES/blob/main/Collective_datastewards.md)

This template was based on the README Template Suite for Archaeology created by Tobiáš Kolmačka (ORCID: 0009-0006-7760-7320) and developed to support researchers at the Institute of Archaeology of the Czech Academy of Sciences (IAP = ARÚ).

This template aims to help you create a README for your data. Fill in only the sections that are relevant to your dataset; delete the rest.

## GUIDELINES

- Anything inside brackets [ ] is an example and should be replaced with real answers or be deleted.
- The symbol > signifies comments to the user, and should be deleted after the README is filled.
- The symbols - - - signify separation of sections and do not need to be deleted.
- The README file name starts with an underscore \_ in order to make it appear first in the list of files, when sorted alphabetically.
- This file is using markdown. By changing the blank lines, symbols and spaces you can break the format. If you wish to keep the file only as a text file this does not affect you. If you plan to use markdown, or transform the file to json or other format later, keep this in mind when editing. For simple text format use this [file](#)
- After filling in the README you can delete the first page with instructions.

## YOUR TEMPLATE STARTS HERE

Specific discipline examples of this file: [add discipline]

**DATASET NAME:** [Data name]

## BASIC INFORMATION

Author(s):  
[First name, last name, ORCID];  
First name, last name, ORCID]

Main contact: [email@example.cz](mailto:email@example.cz)  
Dataset license: [CC-BY 4.0]  
README version: [README\_v1-0]  
PID: <https://doi.org/xxxxxxx>  
Project website: <https://bestproject.cz>

markdown

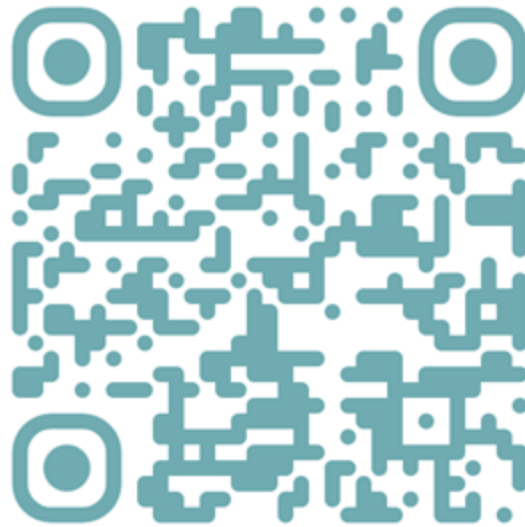
```
{
  "template_metadata": {
    "title": "README file template and examples",
    "authors": "Collective of Data Stewards of the Czech Data Stewards Community",
    "license": {
      "name": "Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0)",
      "url": "https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/"
    },
    "authors_list_url": "https://github.com/Czech-Data-Steward-Community/README_FILES/blob/main/Collective_datastewards.md",
    "attribution": "Based on the README Template Suite for Archaeology created by Tobiáš Kolmačka (ORCID: 0009-0006-7760-7320) developed for the Institute of Archaeology of the Czech Academy of Sciences (IAP = ARÚ).",
    "purpose": "This template aims to help you create a README for your data. Fill in only the sections that are relevant to your dataset; delete the rest.",
    "guidelines": [
      "Anything inside brackets [ ] is an example and should be replaced with real answers or be deleted.",
      "The symbol > signifies comments to the user, and should be deleted after the README is filled.",
      "The symbols - - - signify separation of sections and do not need to be deleted.",
      "The README file name starts with an underscore _ in order to make it appear first in the list of files, when sorted alphabetically.",
      "This file is using markdown. By changing the blank lines, symbols and spaces you can break the format. If you wish to keep the file only as a text file this does not affect you. If you plan to use markdown, or transform the file to json or other format later, keep this in mind when editing. For simple text format use this file",
      "After filling in the README you can delete the first page with instructions."
    ],
    "discipline_specific_examples_placeholder": "[add discipline]"
  },
  "dataset_name": "[Data name]",
  "sections": {
    "basic_information": {
      "authors": [
        "[First name, last name, ORCID]",
        "[First name, last name, ORCID]"
      ],
      "main_contact": "[email@example.cz](mailto:email@example.cz)",
      "dataset_license": "[CC-BY 4.0]",
      "readme_version": "[README_v1-0]",
      "pid": "[https://doi.org/xxxxxxx](https://doi.org/xxxxxxx)",
      "project_website": "[https://bestproject.cz](https://bestproject.cz)"
    },
    "description": {
      "brief_description": {
        "comment": "Write 2-3 sentences describing what the dataset contains and what it is used for.",
        "placeholder": "[discipline specific example here]"
      },
      "research_context": {
        "comment": "Write a brief description of the research project in which the data were produced. What were the goals? What questions was the research intended to answer?",
        "placeholder": "[discipline specific example here]"
      },
      "related_publications": {

```

Json

# LIVE TESTING

Are you interested in joining?  
We would love to have you!



[README file registration – Fill out form](#)

# Thank you

[georgia.koutentaki@cvut.cz](mailto:georgia.koutentaki@cvut.cz)



Co-funded by  
the European Union



Ministry of Education,  
Youth and Sports  
of the Czech Republic



CC BY

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# Citation

1. **WhoAteMyButter.** (n.d.). *[Cropped image of a computer history artifact]*[Digital image]. Wikimedia Commons. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=105764540>
2. **Wikipedia.** (n.d.). *README* Retrieved June 16, 2026, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/README?ref=blog.polarispixels.com#cite\\_note-Decus\\_1975\\_readme-4](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/README?ref=blog.polarispixels.com#cite_note-Decus_1975_readme-4)
3. **Raymond, E. S.** (n.d.). *README file* The Jargon File (version 4.4.7). <http://catb.org/~esr/jargon/html/R/README-file.html>
4. **Software Engineering Stack Exchange.** (2011, April 14). *Origin of README*[Online forum thread]. <https://softwareengineering.stackexchange.com/questions/96966/origin-of-readme/97132#97132>
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