

Improving data management services for researchers at the University of Tartu Library through adopting RDA recommendations

An RDA adoption story on 23 Things: Libraries for Research Data

The challenge addressed

The University of Tartu Library is one of the few Estonian academic libraries which is actively offering RDM services to researchers. This work was started more than 10 years ago by introducing Open Access, followed by advocating Open Science. Our biggest challenge has been finding ways to increase and offer more complex RDM services outside the University of Tartu by involving other Estonian research libraries. We saw that one possible approach to solving this problem was the adoption of RDA's "[23 Things: Libraries for Research Data](#)".

Estonia still has no official Open Science policy, but researchers are a part of the international community and therefore, libraries have to be proactive and offer RDM services based on the best practices of other universities worldwide.

The RDA output adopted

The University of Tartu Library officially adopted RDA's "23 Things: Libraries for Research Data" in September 2020; however, we have been offering most of the services described in this recommendation on different levels already for many years. 23 Things helped us to look at our services in a more complex way and to encourage and support the staff of other universities to implement more RDM services (<https://utlib.ut.ee/avatud-teadus-raamatukogudele> in Estonian).

In order to get other academic libraries involved and to develop advanced RDM services, we also based our training web for other libraries on the recommendations of 23 Things.

The adoption process

We started planning for the official adoption process since [becoming an RDA Node at the end of 2019](#). Our library's Open Science team went through all the materials in 23 Things and modified some of them based on our Estonian research libraries' needs. We set up a website for Estonian libraries to help them to get full information, similarly to 23 Things. Then we started to work with other research libraries to help them to introduce the 23 Things at their libraries:

1. The library of TalTech underwent some reorganizations, and their small RDM support team asked us to set up a consultation for the library staff and a training session for their researchers, which were held on two days in the end of February 2020. As the UT and TalTech are partners in the DataCite Estonia Consortium, we provide them with all kinds of printed and web-based information that could help to start and continue the services.

2. Tallinn University decided not to establish their own research data repository, preferring to sign an agreement to join the UT data repository DataDOI. This needed lots of work from both sides to solve all the legal and technical issues.
3. The University of Life Sciences is also located in Tartu, so it is easy to meet and discuss the challenges. Their library has great support from the university administration, enabling them to actively offer small-scale RDM services.
4. As the UT Library is the leading institution in these processes, we cooperate with other University units, such as the Grant Office (seminar on 16 June, 2020) and the Centre for Ethics (seminar on 19 May, 2020).
5. Estonian Research Council as the research funder requires DMP-s from grant applicants. Reviewing of DMP-s has been a topic of two seminars (8 April and 16 September). The latter was held together with the UT Grant Office and the EULS Library, helping to create common knowledge.

Impact

Estonia is a small country and we know each other quite well in the RDM support community, therefore, information spreads quickly and effectively. 23 Things helped us to systematize and analyze the knowledge we have already acquired and to identify the still existing gaps. We were surprised to see that libraries have no clear idea about how and with which results the basic data literacy is taught to students and researchers at their universities.

Our idea is to develop courses on basic data literacy, similarly to courses on information literacy which are carried out at all universities.

The UT Library has created a course for doctoral students “Research Data Management and Publishing”, which the other universities are interested in adopting. Adopting 23 Things motivated the UT Library to create a RDM hub for other research libraries to support their activities.

Lessons learned

First of all, support from all administrative levels of the university is crucial. This determines how much effort libraries can put to different tasks and the ratio of proactivity and putting out fires, like the DMP support.

From the feedback of libraries, we realized that all roads lead to Rome -- Estonia needs an Open Science policy which could provide a solid basis for universities and their libraries to develop RDM services and for researchers to benefit from these services.

About the organisation

The University of Tartu (UT) is a classical university, located in the South-Eastern part of Estonia, founded in 1632. The University of Tartu belongs to the top 1.2% of the world’s best universities. At the moment, there are more than 13 thousand students (12% international students, 39% master's and doctoral students) and 3000 employees (51% academic staff of which 186 are professors and 14% are international teaching and research staff members).

We collaborate with the Tallinn University of Technology (TalTech), Tallinn University and the Estonian University of Life Sciences (EULS).

UT Library has close working contacts with the Ministry of Education and Research and Estonian Research Council.

Contact

<https://utlib.ut.ee/en>

<https://www.facebook.com/RDAEstonia/>



