

How to establish research data solutions in libraries

Libraries are increasingly deploying infrastructures and support services for research data management. These services ranges from consultations with researchers for writing grant proposals and training for graduate students on good practices to running a data archive and providing data publishing services. These activities bring opportunities for libraries such as new co-operations – within and across institutions – and also challenges such as adapting generic services to highly subject-specific requirements in a given research field.

In September 2014, the RDA group “Libraries for Research Data” met in Amsterdam, Netherlands, at the fourth plenary of the Research Data Alliance. About 80 participants exchanged experiences on research data solutions in libraries. Successful yet varied examples were presented and discussed. Recommendations can be extracted as follows:

1. Make services usable – don’t duplicate services!

- Link to existing services, wherever possible, e.g. through re3data.org.
- In the case of own storage services, use institutional or shared academic cloud and dropbox-like services, where existing; a limited space for each researcher (e.g. 1 GB) might already be a start and cost recovery options for special requirements can be added on top of that.
- Be outspoken about the services that you already experienced as being helpful for researchers and not adding additional burden, e.g. data management plans, data publishing with DOI, maintaining data for fulfilling funders requirements on the availability and integrity of data.

2. Partner up – expect it to be easier if partners are similar!

- Build a brand for a network with researchers on campus to define and assess services, align developments and share capacity; include IT services, research services and find a supporter at the highest possible level in university administration; if possible make this a governance organization.
- Work with not for the researchers to bridge any gaps between research and libraries.
- Integrate your research data training into the existing curricula in the research context, specifically graduate schools.

3. Go find the researcher’s heart – this gets collaboration started!

- Focus on grant proposals, the source of resources for most researchers, develop workflows, info-sheets, templates, consultations in close cooperation with research service offices.
- Offer researchers a reliable place and location for data that they reference in journal articles – many publishers or reviewers increasingly require this.
- Build a data asset registry for making the public data records of your researchers visible on the web and link them to literature, wherever possible.

4. Use technologies as solutions – not drivers!

- Collect user stories (onesentence descriptions of what researchers need) rather than talking about infrastructure and technology.
- Apply quick results and apply an iterative, agile approach – researchers are used to work in an incremental fashion.

5. Help make your organisation data-aware!

- An institutional data policy is an effective starting point for cross-disciplinary communication.
- Put research data in the context of good research practice, reproducibility of research, the masses of unpublished negative results and the duplication of research.
- Refer to the possibility of using data publications as part of the evaluation of research performance and career progression; data literacy can become an essential soft skill.
- Make sure your staff are sufficiently trained and experienced in research data – engage in projects!

Further Reading

Salo, D. (2013). *How to Scuttle a Scholarly Communication Initiative*. *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication* 1(4):eP1075. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7710/2162-3309.1075>

Jones, S.; Pryor, G. & Whyte, A. (2013). *How to Develop Research Data Management Services – a guide for HEIs*. *DCC How-to Guides*. Edinburgh: Digital Curation Centre. <http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/how-guides>

Presenters – Amy Nurnberger, University of Columbia; Jeroen Rombouts, Technical University of Delft; Marianne van der Heijden, Netherlands Institute of Ecology; Stuart McDonald, University of Edinburgh; Daniel Kurzawe, University of Göttingen; Michael Witt, Purdue University

Summary – Birgit Schmidt, Göttingen State and University Library

Chairs – Wolfram Horstmann, Göttingen State and University Library; Kathleen Shearer, Confederation of Open Access Repositories; Michael Witt, Purdue University Libraries