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Training Librarians for Research Data Management Support

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At the International Digital Curation Conference (IDCC) last January a full day workshop showcased five training courses on research data management (RDM) for liaison librarians and other support staff. By sharing training materials and lessons learned, the speakers hoped to enable participants to run their own courses more easily. The workshop proved to be a valuable opportunity to share experiences and get inspiration. Attendees came from over 15 different countries, including Australia, the United States, Denmark, Estonia and Japan, so it was a truly international discussion.

The role of libraries was a key discussion point, and concerns about providing support on research data management were common across the range of countries. Many of the participants were just getting started so this posed a new area of work for them. Some were daunted by the prospect that they not only needed to learn themselves, but then also had to train colleagues and support researchers. Several of the training courses presented at the workshop demonstrate how relevant librarians existing skills are to allay some of these fears. There is much that can be built on.

Courses

The following five courses were presented at the event. The content from each course is available for reuse and a comparison of the different module in each is available in the table below.

| Essentials 4 Data Support | RDMRose | DIY Research Data ToolKit | supportDM | RDM Support |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I - Definitions II - Planning Phase III - Research Phase [collecting, storing & describing data] IV - User Phase [archiving, publishing, citing data] V - Legislation & Policy [includes licensing] VI - Data Support [roles, case studies] | 1. Introduction, RDM and the role of LIS 2. Nature of research and need for RDM [policy & practice] 3. Digital curation lifecycle [including DMPs] 4. Key institutions and projects in RDM [support landscape] 5. What is data? 6. Managing data [storage, description, citation] 7. Case studies of research projects 8. Institutional case study [library role in RDM] | 1. Pre-training [intro & research data explained] 2. Data management planning 3. Organising & documenting data 4. Data storage & security 5. Ethics & copyright 6. Data sharing 7. Independent study assignment [Data Curation Profiles interview] | 1. About research data management 2. Guidance and support for researchers 3. Data management planning 4. What data to keep and why 5. Cataloguing data 6. Sharing data | 1. Introduction to research, data and RDM 2. Data Management Planning 3. Data storage & retention 4. Data organization & description 5. Rules on research data 6. Data sharing & reuse 7. Data & services [throughout the training: case study] |

Essentials 4 Data Support is an introductory course for people who (are going to) support researchers in data management. The course is divided into six chapters and can be taken online or as a full course, which is a combination of e-learning and two full day meetings. Essentials 4 Data Support is provided by Research Data Netherlands, an alliance of three Dutch data archives. It replaces Data Intelligence 4 Librarians, the data management course run by DANS and 3TU data centre.

Course materials: <http://datasupport.researchdata.nl/en>

RDMRose is a set of learning materials on research data management for information professionals that can be used for taught courses and continuing professional development. It consists of eight sessions and comes with a self-evaluation tool to help those with some prior RDM knowledge to select the most important sections to cover. The curriculum is research-led and inquiry based, encouraging reflection on how issues relate to the librarian's own role amidst other professional services. RDMRose was developed by the iSchool at the University of Sheffield, and was trialled with library staff at the Universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York.

Course materials: http://rdmrose.group.shef.ac.uk/?page_id=10

The Do-It-Yourself Research Data Management Training Kit for Librarians builds on the Research Data MANTRA online course (originally developed for PhD students), adding discussion questions and exercises targeted at academic service librarians. The kit is divided into five sessions and contains a mixture of MANTRA units and exercises from the UK Data Services' *Managing and sharing data* training resources. Pre-training promotional slides and evaluation forms are also provided. MANTRA and the DIY Kit are maintained by EDINA and the University of Edinburgh Data Library.

Course materials: <http://datalib.edina.ac.uk/mantra/libtraining.html>

supportDM is a blended learning course for people in RDM support roles, consisting of six modules. The online modules were, like Research Data MANTRA, developed in Xerte and can be imported in virtual learning environments. They are accompanied by presentations, exercises, tasks and notes on using the material. The course was developed by Library Services at the University of East London.

Course materials: <http://www.uel.ac.uk/trad/outputs/resources>

RDM Support was developed for the liaison librarians of the University of Amsterdam Library. The learning materials for this seven session taught course consist of presentations, exercises and video transcripts. Almost all videos used are from Research Data MANTRA. A questionnaire is provided that can be used to gauge prior knowledge before the training and assess the impact of the training afterwards. This questionnaire is modelled on the self-evaluation tool from RDMRose.

Course materials: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.1285313>

Common themes

Two themes emerged strongly in discussion of the courses: namely the need to view

things from a researcher perspective and the need to build confidence amongst librarians.

One course that has evolved significantly is that offered by Research Data Netherlands. The course was entirely reshaped to focus more on a researcher's perspective: originally Data Intelligence 4 Librarians addressed the skills needed by those who support researchers, whereas Essentials 4 Data Support is framed around researchers' practices and their lifecycle. Participants in the RDMRose course similarly found the DCC Lifecycle Model a bit too curation specific for addressing RDM – a different perspective was needed. A number of exercises were devised to encourage participants to get out of the library and talk to researchers. Others took care to address their colleagues as researchers when delivering training so they could empathise with users. There was consensus across the courses that understanding researchers' workflows and needs was critical to deliver appropriate support.

The need to build confidence amongst librarians that they are equipped to support RDM was another common theme. The *DIY Training Kit* in particular plays close attention to this. Sessions focus on discussion of online modules that participants had considered in advance. By keeping presentations to a minimum, the course designers hoped to avoid the perception that there is an expert on each topic who should be consulted. Discussions served to show that every participant had something to contribute and could draw extensively on their existing skills. Each of the five courses presented included exercises around interviewing researchers, developing guidance websites or responding to fictional enquiries, precisely to reassure participants that they could engage and handle such requests if called on. In light of this core skillset, the RDM Support course focuses explicitly on sharing RDM-specific knowledge so participants are aware of the different policies, legislation and practices pertaining to research data.

Selecting content to reuse

The IDCC workshop included an exercise on prioritising topics to be covered in courses. When discussing which elements to include, participants found it hard to select. There are lots of topics that *could* be included and all were felt to be relevant. The choice largely came down to the target audience. For researchers, delegates focused on topics that emphasised benefits to engage their interest such as citation and impact. Data management planning and policy requirements were selected by most groups too. Discussion picked up on the need for subject-specific examples to set general principles in practice and a suggestion was made to arrange prominent researchers to talk as they would make a more persuasive case for RDM.

Upcoming work

Discussion from the event at IDCC is informing Research Data Management workshops at the LIBER conference in June 2015¹. The first half-day workshop will address data policy and how RDM is a new leadership role for libraries, while the second will focus on

¹ For details of the "Libraries and research data: Towards a new leadership role" workshops at the LIBER conference, see: http://www.liber2015.org.uk/event/libraries-and-research-data-towards-a-new-leadership-role-part-1/?instance_id=112

providing support via training and data management plans. The FOSTER project² is also collating existing training materials that promote RDM and open science. These materials are being used to develop a number of e-learning and blended learning courses. There is a wealth of material to draw from and much of the content is made available under CC-BY licenses to provide opportunities for remixing and reuse. The clear message from our final panel at IDCC was the earlier you start the better: don't use a lack of infrastructure as an excuse, make use of what has already been shared and get started!

The presentations from the workshop can be found at <http://www.dcc.ac.uk/events/workshops/comparing-notes>.

² <https://www.fosteropenscience.eu/project>