Conference or Workshop Item

Title: Research data management: life beyond the laptop

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Research Data Management: life beyond the laptop

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Outline

- Research data management drivers at Northampton
- Current RDM practice
- The Northampton DAF project
- Moving from project to policy
- The university’s Research Data Policy and Roadmap
- Implementing the policy
RDM drivers at Northampton

- REF: research environment; impact
- Institutional reputation
- Pressure from funders: government; RCUK; EPSRC (sharing mandates)
- Legislative requirements: FOI/EIR requests; Data protection
- Publisher demands: evidence to support published work
- Long term (open) access: reuse and repurpose
- Good research practice
RDM practice at Northampton

- Back in 2010, little was known centrally about university researchers’ data storage requirements, or the research workflow that incorporated the creation and management of data
- No university wide data storage policy or procedure existed
- So we needed to find out more...
- **Data Asset Framework project** – investigated the types of data held by researchers throughout the university, researchers’ data management practices, and the risks associated with these practices
DAF at Northampton

• Project team:
  – two project researchers (graduate interns) plus a Project Board comprising staff with expertise in repositories, records management and collection development

• Ran from May to June 2010 (eight weeks)

• Data collection, three stages:
  – Initial interviews with research leaders in each School; online survey of researchers (80 responses); 16 one-to-one interviews with researchers

• Topics covered:
  – Types, sizes and formats of research data; data ownership; storage; security; sharing and access (short and long term); funders’ requirements
DAF project - findings

- RDM practice varies according to:
  - Researcher type (research student; independent researcher; collaborator)
  - File type (some commonality e.g. MS Office files; some disparity e.g. databases, audio and video)
  - Research cycle stage e.g. requirements for data storage and sharing

- Most very conscious of data security (protection and loss)

- Attitudes to open access to data covered the full spectrum – from highly in favour or vehemently against. Disciplinary differences were apparent.
DAF project - concerns

Lots of good practice, especially in data security, but in some cases:

- Uncertainty over ownership of research data
- Some data still collected in out-dated formats
- Data management practices often *ad hoc* rather than informed by good practice
- Data sometimes neglected once a project is complete
- Researchers often ill-informed (or misinformed) of the services available to them
Recommendations

- Nine recommendations made, covering:
  - Reporting to senior research managers and leaders
  - Creation of research data policy (and procedure to support it)
  - Clarification of ownership of research data
  - Training and guidance
  - Dissemination of findings

(Full results and recommendations are described in the project report – see Alexogiannopoulos et al., 2010)
From project to policy (1)

- October 2010 – DAF project report presented to University Research Committee (URC)

- November 2010 - URC Research Data Working Group convened to discuss:
  - Scope of policy
  - Fit with research lifecycle
  - Procedure to support policy
  - Relationship with other university policies and practices (e.g. research ethics; academic misconduct)

- November-December 2010 – policies from other institutions reviewed
From project to policy (2)

• January 2011 – discussions with the Data Curation Centre (DCC) re creation of a ‘generic’ version of the data management planning tool DMP Online

• January 2011 – first RDM proposal presented to URC

• Members of URC expressed concern

• Following further discussion between researchers, records managers and library staff, a revised proposal was eventually submitted to URC in June 2011

• … and the University’s Research Data Policy was approved
The Research Data Policy:

- Recognises that good research is underpinned by good RDM
- Expects RCUK recommendations for good data management to be followed
- Encourages each Principal Investigator to complete a data management plan at the start of every project (DMP Online recommended for this purpose)

This to be supported by:

- A central dedicated storage facility for research data
- Support and training
Meanwhile...

Rapid progress in the sector:

- **RCUK and HEFCE joint commitment to open access**
  - Research outputs to be “made available as widely as possible both within and beyond the research community”

- **EPSRC policy framework on research data**
  - Lays out principles and expectations concerning management and provision of access to EPSRC-funded data
  - All EPSRC-funded HEIs to produce and follow a roadmap describing how these expectations will be met

- **JISC Managing Research Data Programme**
  - Development and implementation of data management tools, technologies and services
UoN’s Research Data Roadmap

- Although based on EPSRC expectations, the UoN roadmap is designed to be relevant to all disciplines

- The expectations cover:
  - awareness of regulatory environment and good RDM practice; access to data (digital and physical); policy; provision of descriptive metadata; data curation and long term preservation; and resourcing

- For each of the EPSRC’s expectations the roadmap outlines:
  - Current practice at UoN; action needed to fill any identified gaps; timescale for action; resources required

- Approved by Research and Enterprise Committee April 2012; now awaiting discussion by the university’s Executive Team
Implementing the policy

• Implementation of the Research Data Policy and Roadmap is now the subject of a DCC ‘institutional engagement’
  – 60 days of support from DCC experts

• DCC will be working with researchers and professional staff to:
  – Promote awareness and benefits of good RDM practice
  – Identify UoN researcher priorities in RDM
  – Implement a research data storage facility
  – Provide training, guidance and support
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