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# Research Data Management at the University of Northampton: a case study

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Briefing

20<sup>th</sup> May 2014





# Outline

- Introduction: the University of Northampton
- RDM at Northampton – a brief history
- Implementation of our RDM policy and roadmap
- Where next?





# INTRODUCING THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHAMPTON





# The University of Northampton

- University status achieved in 2005
- 11590 undergraduate students; 2445 postgraduate students (HESA\*, 2012/3)
- 250+ research students plus growing number of research active staff
- Increased interest in research and supporting the research community





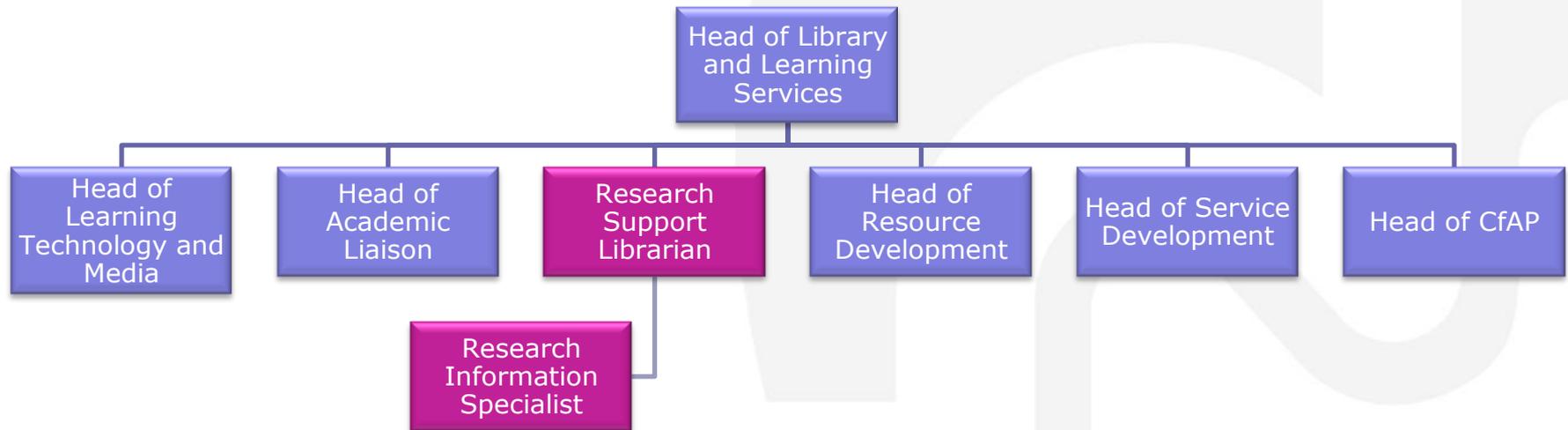
# Our new campus

But resources are now being diverted towards our big move...





# Library and Learning Services



- Since 2006 Library and Learning Services have had a **Research Support Team**; responsible for:
  - Supporting researchers across the university
  - Managing and coordinating applied research within LLS
- RDM services are led by this team





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# A BRIEF HISTORY OF RESEARCH DATA MANAGEMENT AT NORTHAMPTON





# RDM drivers at Northampton

Like other UK institutions, we were (and are) driven by...

- Pressure from funders (e.g. government; RCUK; EPSRC ) for long term (open) access to enable reuse and repurpose
- REF: research environment; impact
- Legislative requirements: FOI/EIR requests; Data protection
- Publisher demands: evidence to support published work
- **Good research practice**





# Research data at Northampton

Back in 2010...

- External drivers beginning to make themselves felt
- Central services knew little about university researchers' data storage requirements, or the research workflow that incorporates the creation and management of data
- No university wide data storage policy or procedure existed
- In NECTAR (our institutional repository), we had available the infrastructure to store and preserve digital data
- So we undertook our first research data project, using the DCC's [Data Asset Framework](#) (DAF)





## DAF at Northampton

- Project team: librarian led; two 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)
- Three stages of data collection: initial interviews with research leaders in each School; online survey of researchers; 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 outcomes

- 80 researchers responded to the survey; 16 follow-up interviews; all Schools represented
- Findings: some common RDM behaviours, some variance; little interest in open access
- Several concerns: uncertainty regarding data ownership; data collection format; 'abandonment' of datasets at project end; server space under-exploited; researchers ill-informed of services available to them
- 9 recommendations, including the creation of a research data policy and procedure

(Full results and recommendations are described in the project report – see [Alexogiannopoulos \*et al.\*, 2010](#))



# From project to policy

October  
2010

- [DAF project report](#) presented to University Research Committee (URC)

Nov  
2010

- First URC Research Data Working Group convened

Nov-Dec  
2010

- Policies from [other institutions](#) reviewed

January  
2011

- Discussions with the Digital Curation Centre (DCC) re 'generic' version of [DMP Online](#)

Jan-June  
2011

- [Research Data Policy](#) proposed, refined and approved





# UoN Research Data Policy

June 2011 – [Research Data Policy](#) approved by University Research Committee:

- Recognised that good research is underpinned by good RDM
- RCUK recommendations to be followed – on record keeping, data security, accessibility and ethical and legal practice
- Principal Investigator encouraged to produce and then follow a data management plan ([DMP Online](#) recommended for this purpose)
- At the end of the project, data to be deposited in a national collection if possible, otherwise in a secure central storage facility to be provided by the University





Then we had a short pause while the Professional Services at Northampton were restructured and reorganised...

... until another external driver made itself felt...



# EPSRC expectations

- In May 2011 the EPSRC had set out a new [policy framework](#) covering “the management and provision of access to EPSRC-funded research data.”
- Comprised 7 core [principles](#) and 9 [expectations](#) covering:
  - Awareness of regulatory environment
  - Access to data behind published work
  - Policy on access to publicly-funded research data
  - Storage of and access to non-digital data
  - Metadata describing research data
  - Preservation and data curation
- Universities wishing to receive EPSRC funding were expected “to have developed a clear roadmap to align their policies and processes with EPSRC’s expectations by **1st May 2012**, and to be fully compliant with these expectations by **1st May 2015**.” ([EPSRC](#))





# UoN Research Data Roadmap

- Although the University at that point received no funding from the EPSRC, it was felt that other funders might follow EPSRC's example, so...
- April 2012 - roadmap created to ensure UoN complies with [EPSRC expectations](#)
- Approved in principle by Research & Enterprise Committee (R&EC) but University senior management team concerned with cost
- July 2013 - Revised lower cost version approved by Chair of R&EC





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# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY AND ROADMAP





# Four elements of implementation

1. Creation of a central research data storage facility
2. RDM skills development for academic and support staff
3. Ongoing engagement with research community
4. Monitoring and evaluation of policy, roadmap and services

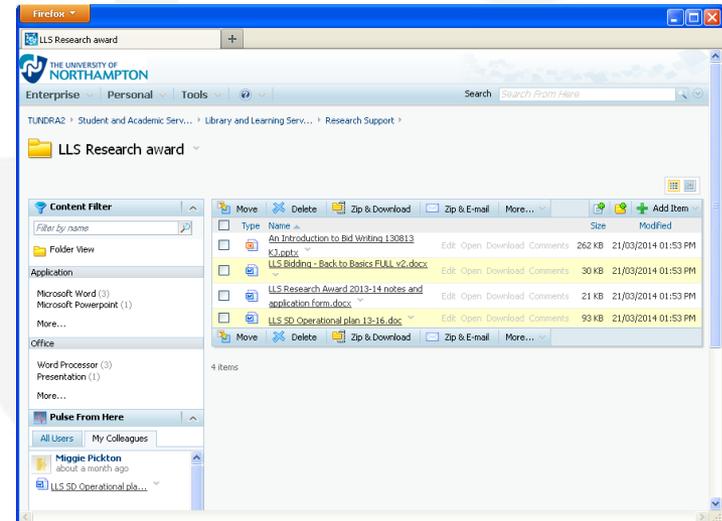




# TUNDRA2

Our infrastructure for data storage is TUNDRA2, a content management system ([OpenText Content Server 10](#))

- Existing central facility which can be used by all researchers
- Handles a wide range of file types and has other useful functionality e.g. rich metadata, social tools
- External users can be registered (subject to availability of licences)
- Permissions can be set at multiple levels for open and secure access
- Currently being piloted by a major EU-funded research project





# DCC institutional engagement

- [Digital Curation Centre](#) ['institutional engagement'](#) – one of 21 projects designed to increase RDM capability across the sector
- Offered us 60 days of expert help
- We chose to use our engagement to raise awareness of good practice in RDM by providing training and guidance for researchers and professional staff
  - School workshops – addressing the issues that matter to them
  - Data management 'clinics' for one-to-one support
  - Training for professional services
  - Tools and guidance





## Ongoing RDM support

The skills learned during the DCC engagement have enabled us to provide further RDM support:

- RDM training embedded in Graduate School programme
  - Introduced during research student induction
  - Highlighted in research supervisor development days
  - Followed up with workshops for research students and early career researchers
- One-to-one support for funding bids and data management planning
  - Internal documentation for bidding activity now has a section on research data





# Research Data Working Group

- Convened by R&EC and chaired by Research Support Librarian
- Comprises representation from research community (range of disciplines) and support services
- RDWG is:
  - Reviewing the research data policy and procedure
  - Creating data management guidelines
  - Recommending amendments to [DMOnline](#)
  - Identifying and disseminating good practice in research data management





## Still to come (1)

- Creation of a standard 'research project' template in TUNDRA2
- Evaluation of TUNDRA2 as a solution for RDM
- Development of [NECTAR](#), our institutional repository, to provide access to research data
- Possible creation of DOIs for open datasets?





## Still to come (2)

- Production of online RDM guidance for Northampton researchers (possibly in our [Research Support Hub](#))
- Monitoring of compliance with RDM policy and roadmap (in conjunction with University Research Ethics Committee?)
- More of the same... awareness raising and embedding good RDM practice among researchers and support staff





# Questions?

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