Good Practice in enabling the re-use of Research Data: The University of Oxford

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The University of Oxford

• Large and diverse research community
  – More than 10,000 researchers
  – 4 Academic Divisions, over 70 departments and faculties, numerous research institutes

• Very decentralized research environment
  – ‘Principle of Subsidiarity’
  – Departments largely responsible for storage and many aspects of data management
  – Many researchers influenced more by disciplinary practice than institutional context
RDM at the University of Oxford

- Work on scoping university RDM requirements began in 2008
- Several JISC-funded projects
- Loose programme of infrastructure development

  Opportunistic  →  Coordinated

- Principles:
  - researchers need to be at the core of development
  - intra-institutional collaboration amongst service providers
  - Modular infrastructure – separate but interacting tools and services

- University RDM Policy ratified in 2012
Oxford RDM Policy

• Indicates value of research data
• Sets minimum of 3 years retention period for data after publication or public release of the work of the research (but must meet funder requirements if longer)
• Researchers responsible for documenting procedures for collection, storage, use, re-use, access, retention and destruction of research data and records
• University responsible for:
  – Providing access to services and facilities for the storage, backup, deposit and retention of research data and records that allow researchers to meet their requirements under this policy and those of the funders of their research
  – Providing researchers with access to training, support and advice in research data and records management
  – Providing the necessary resources to those operational units charged with the provision of these services, facilities and training
Researcher Attitudes toward RDM

Importance of RDM

- **Essential** -- My research would suffer significantly if my data were not properly managed
- **Important** -- My research benefits from the time spent managing data
- **Helpful up to a point** -- Time spent managing research data can make life easier further down the line, but it’s not a very significant aspect of research
- **Not important** -- Devoting time to managing research data would be a distraction from the real work of research

Ever been inspired to undertake new research after looking at past shared data?

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Seeing existing research data may have played a part in shaping new research ideas, but has never been a particularly significant factor**
- **Don’t know / can’t recall**

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RECODE Conference, 15th-16th January, 2015
Data Sharing in Practice

Have you (or has your research team) ever deposited your research data in a dedicated repository or data store?

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Can't recall**

If ‘no’, why not?

- Not aware of an appropriate data store
- Do not want to share it publicly
- First project generating data
- Nothing worth preserving previously
- Not had time to get around to it
- Other

‘Other’s included confidentiality agreements, security concerns, copyright, and ‘will do so shortly’
Where do researchers turn for help?

“Do you know where you would go for help if you needed help writing a data management plan?” (results of 2012 survey)
Need for cross-departmental collaboration for researcher support

- Many people within the University have expertise in aspects of research data management, although none are experts in every aspect of research data management.

**IT Services staff** know about: software, storage, infrastructure, back-up, databases, XML, etc.

**Libraries staff** know about: metadata standards, repositories, data discovery, long-term preservation and curation, specialist software, etc.

**Research Services staff** know about: research administration, proposals, grants, funder mandates, legal requirements, etc.

**Academic staff** know about: community practices and expectations, research processes, data analysis and visualization, and, of course, the problems they face.
Researcher support and coordination

- Website – www.researchdata.ox.ac.uk
- Single point of contact for researchers – researchdata@ox.ac.uk
- Awareness of who are the ‘experts’, via a ‘directory of expertise’
  - We’re using a list in a shared Google Doc consisting of: name, email address, department, area(s) of expertise
- Staff mailing list for discussing issues
- RT queue for handling enquiries, visible to everyone in the support group
  - Tickets taken by the person best positioned to help (or available)
Data Support Services for Researchers

About RDM
An introduction to research data management, including policy expectations from some of Oxford’s main funders.

Working with data
Guidance and links to tools and resources to help you manage your data day-to-day and at the project planning stage.

Sharing data
General guidance on sharing data - what to take into account, licensing, citing and depositing your data.

Tools, services and training
Find out about Oxford tools to help with data management and sharing as well as training on offer.

Useful Links
- Ask a question - Contact Us
- University RDM policy - download or view
- Find out what funders expect - see the funder policies page
- Latest news - Read the Oxford Research Data blog

Please help us improve this site
Name: 
Email: 
Message: 
Submit

Research Data Blog
New RDM course listing page
- Feb 04, 2014
Planning, Appraising, Ingesting and Documenting Data: UK Data Archive Training Workshop

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Modular infrastructure

Research data lifecycle

file organisation & local storage
repository storage
idea
funding bid
data gathering
documentation
curation
planning
lit./data review
analysis & research outputs
deposit
discovery

Oxford
DMPonline

DATASTAGE

Storage-as-a-Service
& OXBOX

ORDS
Online Research Database Service

Institutional Data Repository

Project Costing

HFS Back-up

& EXTERNAL TOOLS AND SERVICES

Training & Support

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Governance and responsibilities

- Research Data Management and Open Data Working Group
  - Chaired by Pro Vice Chancellor for Research
  - Academic representation from each division
  - Representation from the major support departments
- Make recommendations to Research Committee
- Different support departments (informally) responsible for different phases of research lifecycle support:
  - Research Services for pre-project
  - IT Services for ‘live’ research
  - Bodleian Libraries for post-project
Challenges

- Development of frameworks and APIs to package and send data & metadata
- Communications
  - Between support departments, and to and from academics
- Discipline-specific research data management
  - Greater involvement of subject librarians
- Costs of sustainability
  - Still uncertain
  - Reluctance of institutions to take these on
- IPR and licensing
  - Who can apply open licences to data?
  - Who acts as data steward?
Questions?