LIBER Winter Event 2023 – RDM Working Group Workshop
Research Data Management Support Service Models at Universities

When organising a workshop for one's own enjoyment, one is most likely to discuss exactly what one desires. The Research Data Management Working Group has a tradition of arranging workshops from this perspective, and that's why we are always delighted with the workshop outcomes. At the **LIBER Winter Event 2023 held in Florence, Italy**, we set out to stimulate discussions on different ways to organise research data management (RDM) services, exploring the various methods and identifying what works for each purpose.

The workshop featured four brief presentations, each highlighting different approaches to organising RDM services, reflecting (in some cases) the model used in the levels of the LIBER/ABDU Toolkit.This report gives a summary of each presentation, followed by a round-up of the group discussions in which participants and Working Group members shared their experiences with RDM support services in universities.

Naeem Muhammad, Book-a-data-manager Service (BADM), KU Leuven
The Book-a-data-manager service is designed for large projects and research groups at KU Leuven University, providing assistance with the development and practical implementation of data management procedures, tasks, and workflows. Up to 10 working days of consultancy can be requested per project/team, which can be spread over a longer time period.

Neha Moopen, RDM Services, Utrecht University
Utrecht University offers a large spread of RDM services to its researchers. One of these services is the central assignment of a data manager to a project that makes such a request. This presentation explained how the service operates and showed several other RDM services offered by the library, including tools for data storage and archiving.

Elisa Rodenburg, RDM Toolkit, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
Using the 2023 LIBER/ADBU report and the resulting toolkit, this presentation reflects on the different stages VU Amsterdam has gone through in developing RDM support services and what the 'developed' stage looks like in practice. Covering organisational infrastructure, job descriptions of the people involved, and their competencies.

Sara Coppini & Chiara Basalti, The RDM service model at the University of Bologna
While many universities in Italy have not established RDM services, Bologna has taken action. The university's research administration coordinates the Data Stewart service, with stewards having research backgrounds in humanities, social, medical, and technology areas. In this service model, research services handle advice and training, while the library has a role as the maintainer and developer of the data repository.

Peter Verhaar, AI in supporting RDM, Leiden University
The presentation added an additional dimension to the workshop on how artificial intelligence could be utilised in producing RDM services. The strengths of AI were identified as creativity and usefulness in ideation. AI also efficiently generates concise summaries from lengthy texts. When things need to be condensed, can one can rely on the assistance of AI? Reliability is not AI's strongest feature, so human verification of AI-produced material is necessary.

Current topics on RDM services - Group discussions

After the presentations, we divided into discussion groups covering topics such as:

- RDM service models (central, scattered, or both)
- Financial models
- AI for RDM
- Change in organisations and jobs

1. RDM service models (central, scattered, or both)

Participants discussed the value of both centralised and decentralised services. In centralised services, it is possible to specialise and deepen expertise, particularly in terms of necessary basic infrastructures. These include, among others, data repository, archive, and catalogue. In decentralised services, the needs of each scientific discipline are understood, and customisation of services is possible. A level is also needed between decentralised and centralised services to ensure the network functions well together.

2. Financial models

During this breakout session, participants discussed possible financial models for running an RDM support service at a research institute. The following financial models were discussed:

- Reusing existing resources: Existing data support staff can be engaged in various RDM support services.
- Libraries providing paid training: Libraries can offer paid training to external participants. The finances generated from these training sessions can be used to pay support staff involved in RDM support services.
- Project funds: Project funds can be allocated to hire data managers specifically for data management tasks. However, in this case, the funders need to allocate funds for the data management tasks exclusively.
- Public funds: public libraries can spare their resources to do the data management for various projects running at research institutes.

3. AI for RDM

Artificial intelligence can assist in various library tasks. In a small group discussion, the possibility of using AI for brainstorming, indexing, summarising, plagiarism detection, and documenting research data was discussed. Challenges identified for AI include a lack of transparency and issues regarding sensitive data. Additionally, AI cannot accomplish everything, so it is crucial to understand its limitations, common errors, and biases.

4. Change in organisations and jobs

Another group discussed changes in organisations and jobs brought about by libraries' RDM services. The skills that are needed to deliver RDM services were defined, and it was determined who, traditionally, has those skills. Is it a danger to libraries that they often hire (former) researchers to advise researchers about RDM, rather than traditional librarians? Gradually, the discussion focused more on what the role of the library should be in delivering RDM Services and how they can play their part with other units in the university, where there may be different expertise. The group agreed that libraries should have a central place in the RDM landscape and use this position to train and empower others in the university to deliver RDM skills using their expertise. But in the end, the library is a research partner and should be approachable for all researchers.

The LIBER Research Data Management Working Group extends its thanks to all the speakers and facilitators of the group discussions. Special thanks to the participants for their active involvement and for sharing their experiences and expertise!

View the speakers' slides on our Winter Event Zenodo Community: https://zenodo.org/ records/10639801