



LIBER Case Study:

Developing Research Data Management Training and Support at Helsinki University Library

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KEYWORDS: institutional, interdisciplinary

1 What was the starting point?

The University of Helsinki is a multidisciplinary university. The academic community consists of about 40,000 members, students and staff. It operates on four main campuses in Helsinki and 17 other locations. The Helsinki University Library (HULib) has a main library, four campus libraries, and around 220 employees.

We at HULib wanted to understand the current situation at the university in relation to research data management. In order to do this, a pilot was started in 2011. The aim of the pilot was to figure out current practices and find out the main actors in relation to RDM at the university. We also wanted to discover the kind of research data-related problems researchers face during the research process. In the library, the pilot was also considered a good tool for learning about research data-related processes.

The pilot resulted in a new project (2012-2013) where the main focus was on the enhancement of expertise of library personnel. This project lasted for almost one year and consisted of ten workshops and seminars plus assignments that took place between these meetings. In total, over 15 members of personnel from all campus libraries took part in this project and educated one another.

During spring 2014, we are mainly continuing on two fronts: 1. Planning and implementing research data management (RDM) training and support for researchers, and 2. A market survey of RDM tools for the university.

Financing will come from the library budget and projects will be managed by library personnel who also have many other duties. HULib also has a Research Data Working Group and the chair of the group is a member of the executive group of the library.

2 What kind of research data is targeted?

Our target is all kinds of multidisciplinary research data (everything except samples) collected by researchers. In practice, the library will mainly focus on the so-called “long tail” of research data.

3 What is the organisational framework?

Roles and responsibilities

Research data management requires a broad cooperation within the institution, between institutions, nationally and internationally.

HULib was one of the initiators at Helsinki University. We have co-operated with researchers, research groups, faculties, the IT department, research administration, national players like the TTA, the National Research Data project in Finland, and international players like the EU-funded



June 2014



projects EUDAT and OpenAIREplus. Further involvement with the Research Data Alliance (RDA) is planned for the future.

The TTA project is a national project initiated by the Ministry of Education and Culture and coordinated by the Finnish IT Center for Science (CSC).

Policies

The research data policy of Helsinki University is under construction. The research administration unit of the university is responsible for the preparation of the policy. The library is involved in this work.

4 What kind of support services are provided to researchers?

- General information, support and advice in terms of best practices in research data management.
- Research data management will be included as a part of the training of PhD students starting at doctoral schools in spring 2014.
- The library will launch a research data information service for researchers at the end of 2014 (as a result of project no. 1 above).
- Other services are under construction.

5 What kind of infrastructure is provided?

We at the library will mainly concentrate on informing and supporting researchers in terms of policy, data management, etc. Services will be mainly provided by other institutional, national or international players. The library plays a part in bridging the gap between several service providers and researchers' needs.

6 What have you learned so far? What's next?

Research data management requires a broad cooperation within the institution, between institutions, nationally and internationally, as no one can do this on their own. Libraries are neutral players in the field but it is necessary to take researchers' framework and processes into consideration when designing services for them.

Librarians have many potential skills for the education of best practices in research data management. Some enhancement of expertise is needed, but after some practical training, librarians are ready to provide basic education, e.g. in doctoral schools.

Further information

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