

Institutional Data Storage & Management: Problems Encountered & Lessons Learnt

Shane Cox¹ Luc Betbeder-Matibet², David Groenewegen³, Mike Baker⁴

¹ UNSW Australia, Sydney, Australia, luc@unsw.edu.au

² UNSW Australia, Sydney, Australia, shane.cox@unsw.edu.au

³ Monash University, Victoria, Australia, david.groenewegen@monash.edu

⁴ University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia, mike.baker@sydney.edu.au

The effective management of research data is increasingly being recognized as an important aspect of successful research projects. And as a result researchers are increasingly being expected to provide data management planning documents when applying for funding. The Australian Research Council recently introduced a new section to their application process [1] which asks researchers to “[o]utline plans for the management of data produced as a result of the proposed research, including ... storage, access and re-use arrangements”

The Australian Code of Conduct for Responsible Research [2] stipulates responsibilities of institutions and researchers in relation to record-keeping, storage, preservation, ownership, access, confidentiality, retention and disposal of research data. In particular, it highlights that researchers cannot be expected to bear complete responsibility of managing their data and a framework for institutional support is required.

As a result universities across Australia are developing strategies to help support research data management practice, and the introduction of institutional research data storage services is a significant component of this. Examples of storage solutions include; the Large Research Data Storage (LaRDS) service at Monash University [3], the Institutional Research Data Store (IRDS) at the University of Western Australia [4] and the Long Term Research Data Store (LTRDS) at UNSW [5]. These data storage solutions are typically petabyte scale and offered to researchers as a free service. The design of these large-scale services is difficult and there are lessons to be learnt from those who have already implemented or are currently implementing them.

This Birds-of-a-Feather session will examine the various institutional approaches being taken by Universities across Australia to help support good research data management practice and long-term storage of research data. This will be achieved through a panel discussion with a representative from three or four universities including the University of New South Wales, Monash University and the University of Sydney. Each speaker would give a short 4-5 minute presentation of their institutional approach to managing research data and the support that they provide researchers. These presentations will place an emphasis on the key problems they have encountered or are presently encountering in delivering their respective solutions.

An open forum will follow these presentations, which will allow the audience to ask questions of the panel members or to reflect on their institutions current practice. It is hoped that this Birds-of-a-Feather session will highlight the common issues facing institutions developing better data management tools/services for their researchers and promote more cross-institutional communication and collaboration on this topic.

1. Australian Government, Australian Research Council. (2014). Discovery Projects: Instructions to applicants for funding commencing in 2015. Canberra: Australian Government.
2. Australian Government, National Health and Medical Research Council. (2007). Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. Canberra: Australian Government.
3. Monash University Large Research Data Storage Service. Available from: <https://confluence-vre.its.monash.edu.au/display/lardswiki/LaRDS+Wiki> accessed: 1 Jun 2014
4. UWA Institutional Research Data Store. Available from: <http://www.is.uwa.edu.au/research/irds> accessed: 1 Jun 2014.
5. UNSW Long Term Research Data Store. Available from <http://research.unsw.edu.au/unsw-long-term-research-data-store> accessed: 1 Jun 2014
6. Australian Government, National Health and Medical Research Council. (2007). Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. Canberra: Australian Government.