E-Research and Libraries: a Perfect Partnership?

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DESCRIPTION

Libraries have had long histories with many of the challenges facing e-research including interoperability, metadata creation, sustainability and ensuring that systems meet the needs of client communities.[1] By earmarking academic and research libraries as potential collaborators for e-research projects, both researchers and libraries can maximise limited budgets and draw from the complementary expertise of both sectors. This includes capitalising on existing librarianship knowledge bases such as classification, metadata schemas, ontologies, taxonomies and thesauri. Many of the demands of data management and respository services are similar to the demands of information management, the heartland of librarianship. However, potential benefits increase as other departments within an academic or research library are involved, allowing libraries to capitalise on existing relationships with researchers and exploit the library's interdisciplinary focus and knowledge of projects, policies and networks across the university. [2]
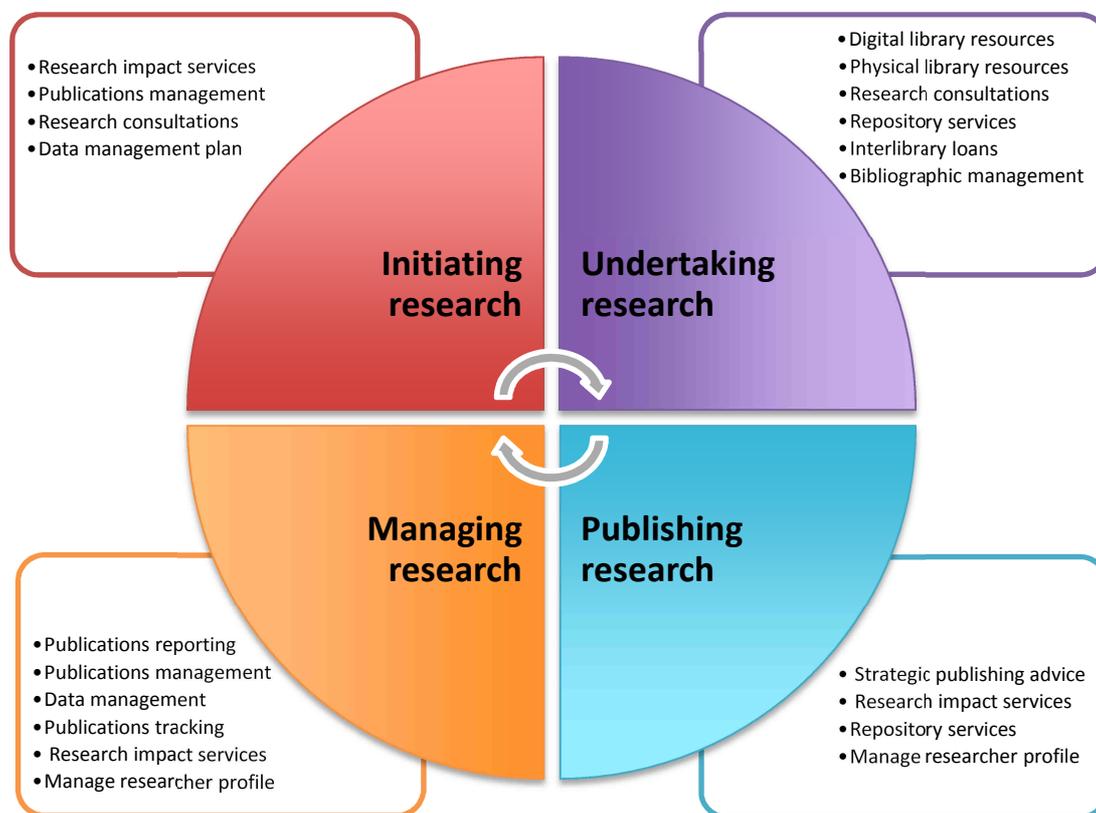
These partnerships are not without challenges. Libraries often have limited budgets which are allocated carefully to meet a broad range of needs across the university. They often cannot offer financial support or vast amounts of server space for data storage and as such independant project funding must often be secured. Not all libraries are comfortable in the e-research space and leaders in this field are still experimenting. There are parts of the e-research space such as respositories and bibliometrics in which libraries are more established; though fields such as research data management are undergoing rapid development. [3]

A brief literature review reveals that for many academic or research libraries, e-research services have tended to cluster around repositories, either creating them as products [4] or providing technical support. [5] Several libraries also appear to be offering services exploring e-literacy for research. [6] However, few have been identified as wholistically linking e-research services to the strategic aims of the library.

UNSW Library leverages existing connections with our research community to ensure the library is an integral part of the research workflow. By providing support to researchers across the spectrum of e-research from resources and repositories, publication and data management to research impact, UNSW Library can maximise existing structures for research support to provide connections for the e-research community at UNSW.

While it's not unusual for academic or research libraries to have a repository team, at UNSW there is the additional asset of two discipline focused outreach teams. These teams form part of the Academic Services Unit and function as the key communicator between UNSW Library and its clients. With at least one outreach librarian per faculty, these teams draw from client relationship management pushing information out from the library as well as gathering knowledge about faculty needs and bringing it back to influence service delivery and development. E-research is a part of a key performance target for the outreach teams and the staff have been tasked with an explicit responsibility to "keep e-research in the headlines." [7]

The work the outreach teams undertake provides links between many of the e-research services offered across UNSW Library. In this way, UNSW Library can act as a hub for e-research connections and services at every stage of the research cycle (see below). This BoF will explore UNSW Library's experiences and the crossover between e-research and information management to progress conversations about the place of libraries in e-research. This session seeks to identify the potential benefits and challenges of working in this space and discusses ways to create opportunities for e-research partnerships between libraries and their research communities.

Initiating research
- Research impact services
- Publications management
- Research consultations
- Data management plan

Undertaking research
- Digital library resources
- Physical library resources
- Research consultations
- Repository services
- Interlibrary loans
- Bibliographic management

Managing research
- Publications reporting
- Publications management
- Data management
- Publications tracking
- Research impact services
- Manage researcher profile

Publishing research
- Strategic publishing advice
- Research impact services
- Repository services
- Manage researcher profile

OUTLINE

1. **Overview of UNSW Library strategic initiatives relating to eResearch services and collaboration on existing eResearch projects at UNSW.** Maude Frances
   5 minutes

2. **What are the potential benefits of researcher-library partnerships and what are some of the challenges facing libraries working in this space?** Kate Byrne, Clare McKenzie
   15 minutes

3. **Discussion.** Engage the audience to participate in discussion.

   35 minutes

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3. Stokker, J. (2008). eResearch: Access and Support to University Researchers. *IATUL Annual Conference Proceedings, 18*, 1-22.

4. Brandt, D. S. (2007). Librarians as partners in e-research. *College & Research Libraries News, 68*(6), 365-396.

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7. Frances, M., Fletcher, J., & Harmer, S. (2011). *Reshaping and rescoping university libraries to fit changing academic requirements*. Paper presented at the 32nd Annual IATUL Conference, Warsaw.

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

Kate Byrne

Kate Byrne is currently acting as the Outreach Team Leader for the Humanities, Creative Arts and Social Sciences at the University of New South Wales Library and previously served as the Outreach Librarian for the Faculty of Law. Her team provides a hub for communication between UNSW Library and the wider UNSW academic community ensuring they are connected to the services they need. Kate's chief research interests lie in communication within the library and the wider information industry. This encapsulates both communication within the industry and communication with clients and can encompass a range of topics including professional development and education within the sector; conceptions of identity and branding for libraries as well as the way clients interpret and experience the libraries we create for them. Previous research has included explorations of the experiences of clients with mobile content within an academic library setting.

Clare McKenzie

Clare McKenzie is a Project Officer with the Library Repository Services team at UNSW Library. This team works collaboratively with the Outreach team to support e-research at UNSW. She has worked previously as the Outreach Librarian for a number of arts and social science research centres and teaching units at the University of New South Wales since April 2011. Her experience with these centres has demonstrated to her the breadth of support necessary for people working in e-research fields and the opportunities for libraries to provide this support. She is particularly interested in exploring alternate forms of research impact and variations on traditional research output. Clare is also committed to ensuring that new entrants to the librarianship profession are equipped to support researchers in these emerging fields through her work as the Chair of the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) New Generation Advisory Committee.

Maude Frances

Maude Frances manages the Library Repository Services unit of The University of New South Wales Library. She has led a number of eResearch projects in which the Library collaborated with researchers in engineering, public health and social sciences to develop repository-based systems for managing research assets. Prior to joining the UNSW Library, Maude managed research resources at the National Centre in HIV Social Research at UNSW.