The elephant in the (meeting) room: universities, data sharing and cultural change.

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DESCRIPTION

Cultural change is a primary motivating factor for those of us working in the emerging area of research data management. Through our projects we want to contribute to big picture change within our institutions to realise the benefits of data management and sharing. We want to engage with the research community, raise awareness, develop support services, applications and processes, enable data sharing and its associated benefits, ease researcher compliance, and deliver all this at an enterprise level. However, the practical steps required to achieve these high-level goals are seldom articulated at project level, and the outcome of cultural change is rarely described as something tangible that can be assessed, measured, or even defined.

Creating cultural change within research teams, faculties and institutions has become “the elephant in the (meeting) room” for project teams when planning, executing and reporting data capture and data management projects. It exists outside the scope of our project deliverables and reporting, yet is implicit everywhere. It requires broad consultation, collaboration and buy-in from diverse stakeholders on a wide range of issues, yet project teams are often small – just one or two people. How do we begin to understand what is meant by cultural change in research data management and sharing, how do we go about making it happen and how do we recognise it when it has happened?

The goal of this BoF session is to share our experiences of expectation around cultural change, and to create an opportunity to learn from each other’s insights into initiating and measuring change within various projects and organisations. We will present our strategies for engaging researchers and effecting cultural change through the Seeding the Commons Project at the University of Sydney, highlight key challenges, and discuss potential models for measuring the impact of project activities. Challenges specific to our experience are those of a large, distributed, multi-disciplinary institution within which research communities and institutional support communities themselves comprise multiple cultures. In this diverse environment, how can we begin to articulate common goals? The short presentation will be followed by a facilitated discussion.

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

Belinda Norman is the Research Data Manager for the ANDS Seeding the Commons project at the University of Sydney. Previously Belinda worked as a Faculty Liaison Librarian at the University of Sydney, providing outreach services as party of the Science Library Service Team. Belinda has worked in academic libraries for the past 12 years, in Sydney and in the USA.

Kate Valentine Stanton is the Policy Officer for Research Data Management at the University of Sydney. Kate is currently working with the Research Portfolio on a project to develop a research data management policy for the University of Sydney. Prior to this, Kate was the Research Data Management Coordinator for the University of Sydney ANDS Seeding the Commons Project. Kate holds a BA/BFA from the University of Auckland and a MIS from Victoria University of Wellington.