Aligning online Research Data Management Planning tools to maximise researcher engagement

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INTRODUCTION

Good Research Data Management Planning has many benefits for researchers helping to ensure data is accurate, complete, authentic, reliable, identifiable, secure and legally and ethically compliant. Funders are increasingly requiring evidence of sound data management practices for project that they fund and the University of Melbourne requires all researchers (including PhD students) to comply with the policy for Research Data and Records Management, which among other things, states that all research projects should have a Data Management Plan (DMP).

This paper outlines some of the online data management tools that have been evaluated, adapted and implemented at the University of Melbourne. In particular, we look at the motivation for researchers to undertake the process of data management, especially ‘what is in it for me?’ as a way of providing an incentive to undertake the training and enhance participant motivation. By aligning training with data management planning our aim was to kill two birds with one stone – raise awareness of data management and have researchers create a data management plan for their own research project as part of the training. In an age where researchers are increasing asked to do more and more, we wanted to bring these activities together so that they could be completed in the most efficient manner.

MELBOURNE MANTRA

Recognising the importance of raising awareness of data management planning, in 2014 the University of Melbourne piloted an online data management training package called MANTRA that was originally developed by the University of Edinburgh [1]. The content was adapted to make it more relevant to Australian researchers and was piloted with a cohort of 146 graduate researchers. Although the pilot was well received, and generally had good feedback, there was a significant attrition rate with only 40 participants reaching the final evaluation stage. It was decided that there was value in the training, but that it needed to be reviewed and condensed.

MANTRA PLUS DMPonline

While reviewing the MANTRA content one member of the working group asked if would be possible to create a data management plan while completing the training. This would have the double benefit of providing an incentive for a researcher to undertake the training and would also provide a concrete practical application of the training. We explored the possibility of building a plan in BlackBoard (the University’s Learning Management System), but this was not technically feasible. Instead, we looked at whether we could integrate MANTRA (running in BlackBoard) and another data management planning tool DMPonline [2].

This paper looks at the benefits of integrating training about data management with the creation of data management plans. We also discuss potential challenges to this approach, such as creating a dependency between two different systems and how to provide a pathway for users who do not need or want to create a DMP.

REFERENCES

1. Mantra http://datalib.edina.ac.uk/mantra/
2. DMPonline https://dmponline.dcc.ac.uk/
ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Peter Neish is the Research Data Curator at the University of Melbourne where he works with researchers on a wide range of research data management projects. Before that he worked at the Victorian Parliamentary Library using his background as a researcher and computer scientist to make databases and parliamentary information more available, standards-based and linked. Before Parliament, he worked at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne integrating botanical information and biodiversity data systems, and he has contributed to national and international biodiversity initiatives and data transfer standards.

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Jennifer Warburton is the Manager, Library Research Partnerships and Programs (Research and Collections) at the University of Melbourne where she focuses on engagement and research partnerships between Digital Scholarship, Graduate Researcher programs, and liaison with Scholarly Information librarians to develop research data management capability and metrics for service delivery. Previously as the Program Leader, Research Impact and Training she coordinated RILAS, the University of Melbourne’s research impact advisory service. In 2015 Jennifer was the recipient of a Universitas 21 Scholarship enabling her to investigate research support service provision at a number of academic libraries in the UK, Ireland and Singapore.