

How reframed/tailored RDM Plans can improve research productivity and research impact

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PROBLEM STATEMENT

The exponential growth of research data is challenging researchers across all fields of expertise, which directly contributes to the complexity of data discovery, processing/analysis and accessibility. Therefore, Research Data Management Plans (RDMP) are becoming an integral part of research. RDMP and changes in the technology ecosystem can revolutionise the data landscape, however, many researchers and institutes do not usually value their significance on research impact. In our opinion, one of the major reasons is that there is more focus on addressing institute forecast and compliance requirements through RDMPs rather than helping researchers better plan their storage, collaboration and processing capabilities around the project. To further aggravate the problem, different research support departments (i.e., ICT¹, Library and Research Office) are not generally on the same page about best Research Data Management practices and can result in conflicting messages to the researchers. This could disillusion researchers towards RDMP process. Therefore, it is important to have a whole of institute approach towards Research Data Management planning which brings together all the university department along with clear communication and support strategy for researchers.

SUGGESTED SOLUTION

Most institutes have some form of systems or tools to provide guidance in the development of an RDMP. However, for researchers whose requirements do not fit the basic templates and questions asked in the RDMP tools, there should be a clear and single point of contact to get further advice. The latter can be achieved by having experienced staff that are able to carry the right conversations and to ask reframed questions so they are relevant to the specific project. We also need to impart the relevant skills and knowledge to be able to interpret the answers so they can be articulated to those administering the approvals. To this end, the key is providing advice that is in sync with all the research support arms (i.e. Library, Research Office and ICT) of the university. This results in better compliance with institute standards, improved access to data for the researchers and collaborators and potentially greater efficiency in accessing, processing and sharing their data.

OUR APPROACH

We will present the practical steps that have been undertaken by Intersect eResearch Analysts at Intersect member institutions to provide the relevant support to all parties involved in developing efficient RDMP. Intersect through its eResearch Analysts guides and assists researchers and support staff to understand research data and relevant requirements. Furthermore, this engagement educates researchers how they can provision relevant tools, how they can store and work with their research data in appropriate repositories, and finally how they can decide if some or all of their data is able to be made FAIR. By having these tailored conversations, we have found that there is greater engagement with the RDMP process and that the resulting outcomes have been significantly more productive, producing plans that are in alignment with institute guidelines, and can simplify and accelerate research data discoverability, accessibility, and reuse. This can enable research datasets to be stored, discovered and accessed in a way that enhances research outcomes and contributes to the greater research community.

¹ Information and Communication Technology