

Making research data possible: negotiating between disciplinary cultures, temporalities, data policies, professional interests and education and training.

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ABSTRACT

The workshop brings together differing perspectives on what makes research data possible. How data is made represents an on-going negotiation between a number of elements. It reflects, firstly, the nature of disciplines and the complex way this is linked to cultures of research data and data sharing. Secondly, data is made across the complex temporalities within different practices of its management. Thirdly, it increasingly reflects the influences of data policies: working at the international and national, down to institutional level. Fourthly, it is also shaped by the renegotiation of professional interests and relationships such as between librarians, computing services, archivists and research administrators. And, fifthly, data is being shaped within models of education and training of current and new information professionals. The panel seeks to bring together a diverse range of participants to explore

appropriate theories and methodologies for work in this field, using a conversation cafe format, and based on discussions around the five elements.

Keywords

Research data, digital curation, information practices, academic discipline, professional identity, curricula and training.

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The session engages with the growing interest in research data in Library and Information Studies (LIS), and seeks to bring together a diverse range of scholars to explore appropriate theories and methodologies for work in this field.

Managing research data has grown far beyond being an issue for the individual researcher or research group. It has developed into a subject for national and international policy interventions and has thus come to occupy university management and support services, such as libraries (Nielsen & Hjørland 2014; Tenopir et al. 2014; Verbaan & Cox 2014). It also needs to be related to more fundamental characteristics of the academic landscape, such as disciplinarity and to changes driven by new technologies and cultures of evaluation and accountability (see Borgman 2007, 2015; Hine 2006; Meyer & Schroeder 2015).

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Data have begun to be regarded as a significant output of research in themselves (Leonelli, 2014), from which it follows that they have to be stored, preserved and made accessible. The pressure to make research data accessible for other researchers leads to new management and support issues, especially for libraries and other providers of research infrastructures, such as publishers. In recent years policies from funding bodies have increasingly included requirements for the planning of data management and encouragement to share data within and across communities (Tenopir et al. 2014). This is based on a belief that data sharing will benefit society by making it possible for new research questions to be asked and answered through novel forms of analysis. This belief might be overplayed, but it is still very powerful and certainly shapes policy demands. In order for such policy objectives to be fully realised and for effective research data services to be developed it is necessary to have a better understanding of how data are conceptualised, produced and handled by different stakeholders in diverse disciplinary, as well as organisational, contexts (Chao et al. 2015). Different disciplinary cultures have different sharing practices (Tam et al. 2014). This makes an understanding of the ways in which epistemic and organisational perspectives are part of the practices surrounding data management essential (Borgman 2015). Research data are part of the research process, yet from the perspective of libraries and support services, the researchers' management and storing of data are not the end of the data life-cycle (Haider & Kjellberg, 2016). Especially not when we consider how it is not only researchers who are involved in managing data, and that wider practices, by enabling certain technical and organisational solutions, also shape data. In this context how information professionals are trained to support data practices becomes critical. Thus we want to highlight five areas where research data is made possible, namely through: (1) disciplinary cultures, (2) The temporalities of research data, i.e. when in a research life-cycle they are examined, (3) Diverse policy demands at different levels ranging from organisational to international policies (4) Professional interests and collaborations and (5) The education and training of LIS students and professionals in supporting data curation.

PURPOSE & QUESTIONS

The session seeks to facilitate discussion of how the LIS community can theorize, research and teach research data and its management (what could be called “data work”) within different areas of practice. A closely associated purpose is to discuss what data means in different areas, as well as what can be valuable ways to conceptualize them in LIS research, in order to make connections and enable translations across them.

The session organisers, with backgrounds in a variety of LIS perspectives in the study of research data and scholarly

communication, will present reflections to initiate discussions intended to identify further possibilities for future research initiatives and collaborations. Rather than comprehensively examining each theme, the purpose of this panel is to stimulate discussion across boundaries and thus to highlight connections that might otherwise be hidden.

The following themes function as entry points and will initially structure the discussions:



Figure 1. The five themes

Research data and disciplinary cultures

How are research data and data sharing practices related to the culture of disciplines? And what are the implications for developing data services and policies of having a deeper understanding of research cultures?

Winnie Tam is a PhD researcher at the Centre for Information Management, Loughborough University, UK. Her research is on the inter-relation between data sharing and disciplinary cultures, focusing on geography.

Research data and temporalities

How can an understanding of research data as shaped by its entanglement across different professional practices be focused along temporal aspects? And in what ways can such a focus allow temporality to function as a way to contextualise research data in order to bridge different understandings and interests in the issue?

Jutta Haider is an Associate professor in Information Studies at the Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences, Lund University, Sweden. She has researched scholarly communication, open access and trust and has recently investigated the setting up of a data management centre in a big science context (with Sara Kjellberg).

Research data and data policies

There is an increasing interest at a policy level in how research data can benefit society by making them freely available. How can we study the challenges and negotiations that the demands set out in policies from national and international funders and research councils bring to bear on different research communities? How can we translate policy demands into practices?

Sara Kjellberg works as coordinator of research support services at the library at Malmö University, where she co-leads the establishment of research data management support services. She is also a researcher in Information Studies at Lund University where she recently studied research data management in establishing new big science facilities (with Jutta Haider).

Research data and professional interests

How do professional groups (such as librarians, archivists, computing service staff and research administrators) bridge “gaps” between each others’ concepts of research data and those of multiple disciplinary research communities - and what theories and methods are relevant to studying such gaps and bridging processes/roles?

Andrew Cox is a senior lecturer at the Information School, University of Sheffield, UK. His research revolves around the roles of different professions in supporting RDM.

Research data in education and training

Is the theoretical foundation and knowledge base of LIS able to provide frameworks for data curation education? What are primary roles and responsibilities of data curators? What are educational qualifications and competencies required of data curators? How has LIS education supported professional preparation of data curators so far?

Anna Maria Tammaro is a researcher in digital libraries at University of Parma. She is teaching in the International Master DILL Digital Library Learning (joint course of the University of Tallinn and University of Parma). She is also the Chair of the IFLA Section Library Theory and Research.

Krystyna K. Matusiak is Assistant Professor, Library & Information Science Program, University of Denver. Her research and teaching interests focus on digital libraries and digitization.

Anna Maria Tammaro and Krystyna K. Matusiak are involved in the IFLA research project "Data Curator who is s/he?". This project aims to identify the characteristics of the tasks and the responsibilities of the data curators.

FORMAT OF THE PANEL

The proposed session is targeted at all researchers in LIS who are interested in examining research data less as a technical or managerial issue and instead want to engage in

a conversation about how research data are constructed in and shape practices - not least at a theoretical level - and who are interested in studying research data in ways that go beyond issues of immediate application.

The session draws loosely on a ‘conversation café’ format, which aims to encourage group dialogue (Brown and Isaacs 2005).

Time schedule

- Introduction with reflections from each panellist and instruction for discussions – ca. 50 minutes
- Table discussions in two rounds @ 15 minutes - 30 minutes
- Closing discussion and way forward - 10 minutes

To initiate the conversations, the organisers will first introduce the main aim of the discussions. The organisers will then each host and facilitate conversation at one of five tables, with up to six participants per table. At each table, different aspects of studying and teaching research data will be discussed based on the questions listed above. Participants will be asked to move table halfway through the session. The set-up for discussions is for two rounds of activity as follows:

1st round: The first group initiates by brainstorming ideas to open up the discussion.

2nd round: The second group starts with a summary of the first group discussion and uses their ideas to find connections and ways forward in thinking about the topic.

Discussions will be captured as concept or mind-maps. As a final step the organisers will briefly summarize the conversations at the tables for the whole group and moderate a discussion on how we can move forward. Theories and methodologies will be discussed in relation to suggestions for studies that have come up at the table discussions. The table discussions and the subsequent informal participant interaction can thus serve to kick-start collaborations.

The facilitators will take minutes of the table and plenary discussions and these will be reported in a forthcoming digital publication through the Medium platform in autumn 2016. The documentation will also include a (voluntary) list of participants with links to websites in order to facilitate contacts after the event. The organisers will facilitate and document the process at each café table, using the following starter themes, with the questions outlined above as starting points:

Table 1 – research data and disciplinary cultures (Winnie Tam)

Table 2 – research data and temporalities (Jutta Haider)

Table 3 – research data and data policies (Sara Kjellberg)

Table 4 – research data and professional interests (Andrew Cox)

Table 5 – research data in education and training (Anna-Maria Tamaro)

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