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Data Curation and Management Competencies of New England Region Health Sciences and Science and Technology Librarians

Andrew Creamer  
*University of Massachusetts Medical School*

Myrna E. Morales  
*University of Massachusetts Medical School*

Javier Crespo  
*University of Massachusetts Medical School*

Donna Kafel  
*University of Massachusetts Medical School*

Elaine Russo Martin  
*University of Massachusetts Medical School*

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BACKGROUND

In 2010, the University of Massachusetts Medical School Lamar Souther Library and the National Network of National Libraries of Medicine New England Region (NNLM NE R) and its e-science portal team began to gather data from New England health sciences and science and technology librarians in order to create a data management curriculum for the portal and develop professional development programming by evaluating the specific data curation management competencies and the skills currently possessed by these librarians and those that would be needed to perform these services effectively, as well as the nature and progress of data services being provided by these librarians and those being demanded by their patrons.

METHODS

The team developed the questions for the data management assessment instrument after performing a content analysis of data services and e-science librarian job postings over a five year period, selected library and information science school/data management programs and curricula, and published case studies and best practices related to data services, curation, and management.

- The team posted the assessment on SurveyMonkey.
- A small group of medical librarians at the University of Massachusetts tested the survey and offered feedback to the team on ways to improve the survey.
- The team sent the survey to area health sciences and science and technology librarians.
- After three weeks, the team collected and analyzed the results.

DISCUSSION

A quarter of respondents surveyed stated that they are already managing and curating data sets. This number has nearly doubled since the e-science portal team’s 2009 assessment of New England health sciences and science and technology librarians engaged in e-science. Almost half of respondents stated they will be providing these services in the future. Almost three quarters of respondents stated they are already managing and curating data sets. This number has nearly doubled since the e-science portal team’s 2009 assessment of New England health sciences and science and technology librarians engaged in e-science.

CONCLUSION

This project is helping the University of Massachusetts Medical School Lamar Souther Library and National Network of National Libraries of Medicine New England Region (NNLM NE R) to develop its E-Science Portal data management curriculum and in-person professional development programming for its regional librarians engaged in e-science activities. In addition, this assessment illuminates the many challenges that health sciences libraries in New England are facing trying to engage in e-science. Thus, an area for future investigation is the strategies that libraries are using to deal with these challenges and overcome these obstacles.