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putting the pieces together: theory and practice

Editorial

Baseball and Research Data Management (RDM) Planning: It's All About Depth and Data

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Focus

As any lover of the game of baseball knows, at this time of year it's all about depth—what you built in the farm system and on the bench matters; the data crunched before and during the season comes into play when managing a team to the World Series. Gut feelings and hunches matter too.

Since being affected by the Federal government's open data requirements, libraries and their institutions have been building research data management services and opportunities for researchers. There were libraries and institutions ready to jump into the fray of an ever-evolving RDM landscape, and currently, these services are being assessed in order to expand the depth and breadth of their RDM offerings.

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As Summer fades and Autumn begins dressing the Northern Hemisphere in spectacular shades of gold, orange, red, and aubergine, baseball trims its contenders and playoff season begins. As any lover of the game of baseball knows, at this time of year it's all about depth—what you built in the farm system and on the bench matters; the data crunched before and during the season comes into play when managing a team to the World Series. Gut feelings and hunches matter too.

Since being affected by the Federal government's open data requirements, libraries and their institutions have been building research data management services and opportunities for researchers. There were libraries and institutions ready to jump into the fray of an ever-evolving RDM landscape, and currently, these services are being assessed in order to expand the depth and breadth of their RDM offerings. Like some baseball teams, other libraries didn't have the depth in expertise or data necessary to convince their institutions that this was a strategically and economically viable direction to head. But with patience, planning, surveying their communities, and incrementally building RDM services, they too are heading into the playoffs.

Three of this issue's articles focus on assessing the data management knowledge of biomedical faculty and researchers. In Wiley and Burnette's *Assessing Data Management Support Needs of Bioengineering and Biomedical Research Faculty*, Vela and Shin's *Establishing a Research Data Management Service on a Health Sciences Campus*, and Johnson and Steeves' *Research Data Management Among Life Sciences Faculty: Implications for Library Service,* the libraries used surveys to ascertain to what degree faculty and researchers were aware of services and support for RDM. Vela and Shin's assessment will help them determine and direct how RDM services are developed and implemented at Washington State University. Wiley and Burnett's data showed gaps in the data literacy of faculty and researchers, helping the library to know where to focus changes to their established RDM services. NYU's Life Sciences faculty were surveyed and showed to be open to learning about existing RDM library services giving Johnson, Steeves, and their NYU library colleagues opportunities to increase their promotion and outreach efforts.

Two other articles in this issue look at the development and evaluation of research data management courses. In *Skills, Standards, and Sapp Nelson's Matrix: Evaluating Research Data Management Workshop Offerings,* Coombs, Malinowski, and Nurnberger used the Sapp Nelson Matrix to evaluate existing library workshops on coverage of RDM topics. The authors modified the tool's framework, showing it to be an adaptable and useful instrument for assessment and planning future curriculum changes. In *Building a National Research Data Management Course for Health Information Professionals,* Van Der Volgen and Zhao discuss the National Network of Libraries of Medicine Training Office's (NNLM NTO) development of an eight-week online course to address key RDM concepts and enable information professionals to build or enhance RDM services at their institutions.

Building a cohort of librarians who understand, use, and teach basic computing skills in order to enhance their breadth and depth of handling data, and to encourage other colleagues in developing these skills, is the focus of *Joining Together to Build More: The New England Software Carpentry Library Consortium.* Recognizing that it wasn't enough to talk about the skills necessary for researchers to improve their computer and data handling skills, Atwood et al. founded the New England Software Carpentry Library Consortium (NESCLiC) and software

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carpentry programs in order to “walk the talk”.

While having depth and quantity in an institutional repository (IR) is good, it doesn’t necessarily mean that all that data is useful or accessible. Steven Van Tuyl’s *What’s in the Box? Assessing the Potential Usability of Four Decades of Thesis and Dissertation Supplementary Files*, evaluates the quality and usability of supplementary data files deposited in his institution’s IR and discusses the hurdles researchers encounter in making their data shareable and useable by future researchers.

Collecting and assessing data is key to the development and enhancement of research data management services. As data librarianship focusing on services related to data-driven research matures, the field is building an in-depth approach to the RDM programs and services being developed and offered to the communities it serves. Although the data might point you in a certain direction, sometimes it’s important to make that pitching or pinch-hitter switch—you never know when a gut feeling or hunch will bring you and your team to the World Series.

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