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Serving an Information Potluck at the Research Data Management Roundtable

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Serving an Information Potluck at the Research Data Management Roundtable

Thea Atwood¹, Julie Goldman², Tom Hohenstein³, Carolyn Mills⁴, & Sally Wyman⁵

**Objectives**

The Research Data Management Roundtables are a collaborative effort to address the shared challenges relating to data services and the role of the library. Outside of listservs, conferences, or other multi-day events, there are few means to discuss issues related to beginning or sustaining data management initiatives among organizations, libraries, and librarians. Targeted Roundtables are one method to address this issue.

**Goals**

- Increase collaboration across campuses
- Help others gain from shared understanding
- Develop Communities of Interest and Communities of Practice

**Format**

- Occur three times per year
- One day event: Roundtable + Activity
- Informal setting with guidelines and pre-determined topic
- Capping event at a manageable number
- Committee members facilitate discussions

**Attendees**

Feedback on the most useful aspects of the roundtables:

- “The questions were very helpful to guide the discussion.”
- “Hearing other librarians’ ideas and successes, and commiserating about weaknesses and challenges.”
- “Learning I’m not the only one: with questions, using certain tactics to get RDM working on my campus, with my concerns and frustrations. And even better—to hear how other people solved problems or addressed issues!”

**Methods**

- Collaborate across five institutions
  - Primary means of collaboration: conference calls & email
  - Shared mission & shared understanding

- Select a topic
  - Determine current trends, needs, and requirements
  - Select two related topics for roundtable event
  - Generate topic-related questions

- Select a location
  - Use of home institution
  - Pair with another area activity
  - Easy wins are key!

**Outcomes**

**Common Discussion Themes**

**Suggestions for the Future**

- Data policies, policy development, and examples
- How to teach data management, instruction sessions
- How to gain traction with administration
- Collaborating across campus (IT, Research Affairs, etc)
- Building staff confidence

**Shared Experiences Across Campuses**

- Perception that the library is not as credible in data management/data services
- Inclusion in pertinent data-based conversations
- Lack of policies on research data; lack of knowledge of policies on research data
- Turf wars with other departments on campus
- Library staffing — stability, layoffs, turnover
- Limited and/or inconsistent funding
- Lack of structure or organization on campus around data management topics
- Limited shared vocabulary among librarians, researchers, administration

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