Assessing Data Practices at the University of Utah

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OVERVIEW

The University of Utah Campus Data Group conducted a needs assessment in 2016 to determine the data practices and needs of University of Utah researchers and the services that the Libraries and Center for High Performance Computing (CHPC) could provide to meet those needs. This poster summarizes our research questions, methods, key findings, and next steps for helping researchers manage and share their data at the University of Utah.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1: What types of data and in what quantity are being produced at the University of Utah?
RQ2: How are research data produced by University of Utah researchers currently managed, stored, backed up, described, and shared?
RQ3: What data services can the Marriott Library, Eccles Health Sciences Library, Faust Law Library, and CHPC provide that will best support the needs of our research community?

METHODS

The Campus Data Group assessed the needs of researchers by:
1. Distributing a survey to campus researchers. The survey received 203 responses from University of Utah graduate students, post docs, faculty, and staff. Nearly 70% of respondents were faculty.
2. Conducting two 90-minute focus groups with eight faculty members from different colleges on campus.

SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

- 69% Graduate Students
- 15% Faculty
- 11% Staff
- 2% Undergrad
- 1% Postdoc
- 1% I don’t do research

KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

How large is your data for your current project?

- 31\% 0-30 MB
- 30\% 31-100 GB
- 27\% 101 GB-1 TB
- 18\% 2-100 TB
- 13\% MORE THAN 100 TB
- 4\% NOT SURE

Does your discipline have a repository for sharing research data?

- 20\% Yes
- 34\% No
- 46\% Not Sure

KEY FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

1. "Faculty want to know ‘how to do it right.’ They want to comply with regulations, follow best practices, and make their data/research products widely available and reusable.”
2. "Faculty view themselves as researchers first and foremost and believe that the University should support their research by providing free, easily accessible, centralized data management services.”

KEY FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS (cont.)

3. "Faculty are interested in having a centralized University repository that 1) handles large data files and data sets; 2) ensures that data are available for the long term (10+ years); 3) makes uploading, finding, and accessing data as simple as possible, both within and outside the University.”
4. "Faculty want ‘one-stop shopping’ when they seek assistance with data management: an identifiable person or office who will answer their questions, ensure that they are in compliance with IRB and federal mandates, and direct them to the most appropriate resources for their project.”

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO DATA ASSESSMENT

In response to the Data Services Assessment, the Marriott Library is currently (Winter 2016) building a new data repository for campus researchers to archive and share their data. The data repository will:
- Provide 10 years of guaranteed storage
- Accommodate larger datasets
- Accept a variety of file types
- Generate digital object identifiers (DOI)
- Allow researchers to place a temporary embargo on data until publication
- Provide assistance describing datasets and assigning metadata
- Provide clear rights statements using Creative Commons licenses
- Provide usage statistics for views and downloads
- Offer a user-friendly interface that allows for easier data submission and discoverability of data

FUTURE PLANS

Future plans include:
- A call for faculty participation in Spring 2017 to test workflows and functionality of the Library’s new data repository
- Campus outreach to promote new services and infrastructure
- Increased data management training opportunities on campus
- Creating new policies and documentation including a Data Archiving and Collection Policy, a Data Submission Checklist, a Deposit Agreement, and a Data Management Plan template

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the members of the Campus Data Services Team from the Marriott Library, Eccles Health Science Library, Faust Law Library, and the Center for High Performance Computing for their significant contributions to this work. Special thanks to Melanie Hawks for facilitating the focus group discussions and compiling the Data Management Focus Group Report.