Eating the Research Data Management Policy Elephant: effecting culture change in a diverse research community

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Eating the RDM Policy Elephant: effecting culture change in a diverse research community

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The policy environment

— Digital research environment is rapidly evolving
  — Technological advances in computing ability and power
  — Development of more sophisticated, interoperable systems
  — Escalating rate of data generation, more data
  — Increasing complexity in research outputs
  — Open Access environments

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– Need to develop, rewrite and adapt Research Data Management Policy
  – Go beyond ‘catching up’ with changing environment
  – Lead and inform best data management practices

Defining the policy

RDM Policy is a high-level statement that:

• provides context for strategies and decisions
• communicates standards expected
• informs governance and implementation structure (and development of procedures, guidelines, SOPs)

Needs to adapt (evolve) to technological advances

http://fedinvestonline.info/imalpdrm-palaeomastodon-to-elephant-evolution.html
Communicating the policy

http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/a/6a00d8341c464853ef017ee3d493aa970d-500wi
Research data strategy team

• University research data steward (academic)
• 2 x digital research support officers
• Data security specialist
• Senior policy officer
• Part of Sydney Informatics Hub core facility (Research Portfolio) – data services for all researchers
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- All from research/academic environment
- Develop policy and strategy
- Communicate, consult and work with researchers/faculty/PSUs
- Work with research institutes, LHDs, clinical schools and agencies to facilitate research in clinical environments
- Identify RDM opportunities and implement solutions, improved processes
- Provide outreach, support, training, consultancy for digital research tools
Research culture

Early adopter, embraces change  Resistant to change

Co-operative, 'compliant'  Individualistic
Top-down (cascading) processes

Academic leadership from the top

- Faculty RDM provisions required (from University Executive)
- Outreach/engagement with faculty executive (Dean, ADHDR, Research Manager)
- Support from portfolio leaders (DVCR, Director HDR)
- Encourage faculty leaders to own and communicate RDM within academic community
- Academic involvement is crucial
- RDM should not be viewed as an administrative function

https://www.flickr.com/photos/fleurdels/2479585652
Does this approach change behaviour?

• Few researchers will read policy

• Faculty directives will raise awareness of issues, but will have limited effect in changing attitudes and behaviours

• Need to communicate benefits of improved RDM practices to researchers

• Sell the ‘insurance policy’

Bottom up processes

• Focus on services to researchers, research students
• Give researchers what they want and need
• Provide RDM tools that enhance research processes, maximise research data potential
• Specialised support and consultation to researchers, research groups
• Focussed training and information sessions
• Work with PSUs, faculties, portfolios to provide co-ordinated service

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/the-big-picture/The-Big-Picture-photography-competition-round-230/graham-looker/
Find ‘the sweet spot’

- Focus on research students
- Training in state-of-art RDM practices and tools
- HDR students
  - work with faculty to define RDM objectives (e.g. annual progress reports)
- Honours students
  - Honours research project declaration form
- Supervisors will follow

Positive feedback into further RDM policy development

- RDMP redevelopment, researcher-centric
- New digital RDM tools
- Improvements in infrastructure/technology
- Keeping bureaucratic processes in check
- Increased stakeholder ownership in the research community will result in effective RDM improvements, translate into policy