Reinventing the wheel
Training subject librarians for RDM support at the University of Amsterdam (UvA)

Context
Within the UvA RDM programme (2013-2015) central and faculty policies, data storage and publication facilities, and support are being developed.

Crucial to a successful support service are the subject librarians, expected to be generally the first port of call for researchers.

For them, a basic training course in research data management (support) was developed in-house. It was held from January to April 2014, with 21 participants.

Goals
- covers all aspects of research data management
- takes into account different knowledge levels of participants
- meets participants’ information needs
- stimulates application of general RDM knowledge to subject areas
- maps RDM requirements and needs to Dutch (UvA) regulations and facilities
- offers practical ideas for supporting researchers
- enables self-directed further learning
- is structured and organised clearly
- provides reusable training materials

Research: literature, DCC resources, JISC MRD project outputs, RDM websites, other courses

Design process

Questionnaire: what do participants already know?

Selection and organisation of useful ideas and reusable materials

Drafting materials: notes, presentations, exercises, video transcripts

Findings
- Since many of the skills needed for RDM are closely aligned with the skills subject librarians already have, the training focused on building confidence by developing knowledge, not skills.
- Most knowledge deficiencies were predictable, with one exception: data citation (Q20); apparently librarians assumed data citation to differ greatly from referencing literature.
- Evaluation of the training shows an increase in knowledge, but also an increase in uncertainty about the consequences of RDM support for subject librarians’ day-to-day work (Q9).
- Adapting and building upon the work of others (i.e., reinventing the wheel) results in a training that is better suited to a specific environment, people and circumstances.

Contents of the course
1. Introduction
   - Research life cycle – Research data – Research data management – Why and for whom is RDM important – This course

2. Data Management Planning
   - What is a data management plan and why is it useful – Checklists and templates – How to support researchers in drawing up a DMP

3. Data Storage & Retention
   - File formats, software and sustainability – Storage media – Safety and security – Selection and destruction of data

4. Data Organisation & Description
   - Organisation and naming of files – Documentation and metadata

5. Rules Concerning Research Data
   - What is good research data management?

6. Data Sharing & Reuse
   - What is a data management plan and why is it useful – Checklists and templates – How to support researchers in drawing up a DMP

7. Data & Services
   - Library support for RDM – Informing – Advising – Referring – Training – Keeping up to date

Final Assignment
Writing a discipline-specific text on RDM for own researchers, to be published on institutional RDM website (rdm.uva.nl/en)

All training materials are available for reuse
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