Strategic Workshop for Research Data Management - November 17, 2015

Notes of Key Issues:

- Must work with the researchers to design systems and requirements for RDM
- Understand the issues for specific disciplines
- Motivational forces for researchers need to be understood, developed. Herding cats with no incentives is unlikely to work
- Democratization of data and democratization of support in working with data is critical
- Data citation – when citation of a researchers data sets are as valuable for tenure and promotion as citation of a researchers scholarly article, we will make major strides forward in RDM
- Discoverability of data is critical and may increasingly become critical to a researcher's reputation.
- Issues of researcher competitiveness – a complex issue. Concerns that RDM will take up time that can be ill afforded balanced with the likelihood that researchers who do not manage their data well and make it open and accessible will not be competitive with researchers in other jurisdictions where open data and open access are required.
- Recognize that RDM is about more than big data – many researchers are doing serious work with comparatively small data sets.
- Questions of depth/mediation – raw data to highly processed data
- Data management plans should be living plans throughout the research life-cycle and beyond.
- RDM must recognize that data sets are of potential long-term value well beyond the research project in which they were generated.
- Harmonization among disciplines, institutions, and countries for RDM is critical to make RDM truly effective.
- Industry/University collaboration needs to be examined more. Industry may have a role in the provision of RDM services; e.g. storage, but industry also may have huge quantities of data that would be valuable input to research activities.
- Increasingly university based research is based in part on data that is purchased. Are there possibilities for a multi-institution "buyers' club" approach as has happened with journal subscriptions?
- Canadian researchers have a much more difficult time accessing government generated data around vital statistics than colleagues in the United States. The federal government's commitment to open data must be made real for Canadian researchers.
- On-going concern about the Research Data Centres (Stats. Canada)– will they be sustained?
- There are many interesting RDM pilot projects around the country – none are ready to work at scale. The scaling of RDM to meet the needs of most if not all researchers presents huge challenges in funding, adequate availability of staff support, and infrastructure.
- There are many organizations that play a role related to the stewardship of research data. The multiple organizations do not suggest duplication rather they suggest the complexity of managing research data for the long-term and ensuring a complete system is developed. The multiple organizations must co-operate and collaborate. There is a remarkable degree of collaboration under way. That collaboration must scale.

The universities represented made a strong statement that stronger collaboration and mutual development of tools and services in RDM is critical. Collaborative development that has already occurred among SFU, U of A, and UPEI together with the work that has been launched through Portage was cited as positive examples of such collaboration and development. The collaboration must occur at significantly greater degree and scope. Accordingly the attendees agreed:

- Universities should work towards a Canada-wide template for university RDM policies
- Such a policy template should embody a set of RDM set of principles
- Such a policy would be an "at a minimum" document. Individual universities would have complete freedom to augment and customize policies provided minimum requirements were met.
- The university participants asked Research Data Canada to act as a convenor to begin this process.
- UPEI, York, Alberta, University of Victoria were identified as the universities that would act as a working group to work with RDC. Subsequent to the meeting U de M has joined the group with the Université Laval ready to act as a reviewer of work produced.
- RDC will convene the group shortly.
- Subsequent to the development of the policy template the universities present noted that it will likely be appropriate to convene a Steering Committee to identify and co-ordinate projects in tool and services development, perhaps as is appropriate, through the aegis of Portage.