A Tale of Three Data Stewards

Lessons Learned by the Cross-Disciplinary Data Stewardship Team at UniVie

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Goals and Target Audience

• **Goals of the Data Stewardship Program**
  - Acting as the first point of contact
  - Helping researchers access the University's diverse services and infrastructure
  - Providing domain-specific research data management (RDM) support
  - Raising awareness for responsible research focusing on RDM
  - Fostering reproducibility practices

• **Target Audience**
  - Researchers and scientific staff
  - PhD students and PostDocs
  - Bachelor's and Master's students
  - General staff
Research Data Management at the University of Vienna

- **University-wide Research Data Management WG – strategic development**
  - Coordinated by the University Library
  - Vice-rector for Digitization and Knowledge Transfer

- **Research Data Management (RDM) services – joint effort** of the:
  - Library
  - Computer Center
  - (Selected) Faculties and Research Centers – Data Stewards
  - Department of Innovation and Digitalisation in Law – Legal Helpdesk for RDM
  - Research Support and Career Development
  - Center for Teaching and Learning
  - Quality Assurance

Until 2022 mostly generic RDM services

Data stewardship programme for domain-specific RDM support
Data Steward Network: Discipline-Specific RDM Support

Main responsibilities:
- Support and consulting
- Training
- Needs assessment
- Workflow development

Data stewards are embedded at the faculties and research center.

- **Data Steward (DS) Network** (part of the Research Data Management team)

- **“Data Steward” certificate course** in the first year on the job
Data Stewardship Development

- **RDM Policy established**
  - September 2021

- **Concept Data Stewardship**
  - October 2021

- **1st Data Steward hired**
  - June 2022

- **Data Steward Course launched**
  - October 2022

- **2nd Data Steward hired**
  - October 2022

- **3rd Data Steward hired**
  - March 2023
Becoming a Data Steward

- Data Steward:
  - Still working in science but with less precarious working conditions
  - Co-development of a new role at the University
  - Teaching/education
  - Involved in various different projects

PhD in Chemistry

universität wien
My Background
PhD in Anthropology and Demography

Archeology of Central Mexico
Radiocarbon and Isotopes
Demography
Anthropology
Field Work
Project Management
Teaching Laboratories
Teaching
Considering Culture
Grant Writing
Lab Experience
Data Mining
Outreach

Why Data Stewardship?

- I'm (scientifically) nosy.
- I like helping others.
- I like puzzles.
- Good things need all of us.
My Background

Library, Archives, Documentation
- studies in Eisenstadt and Stuttgart
- field of diploma thesis: information ethics (access to legal information in Austria)
- certificate courses „data librarian“ and „data steward“
- self-employed IT project coordinator

German studies
- studies in Vienna
- field of diploma thesis: modern german literature (Star Trek fan fiction)

Connections & curiosity
- focus on „translation“ between e.g. software developers and researchers
- bringing people and information together
- being interested in nearly everything

Communication, Publishing
- journalist
- blogger, social media editor
- co-editor OA journal
- co-editor discipline-specific repository
- mainly publications in library science

Urban and regional development
- studies in Vienna (ongoing)
- field of master thesis: monitoring, data management, urban heat stress

Forest, Environment, Nature, Climate
- certified forest educator
- certified forest & culture guide
- various courses, e.g. mobility, renewable energy, wood ants, forestry, soil protection, climate change, bat protection...

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International Involvement and Outreach

June 2022 to October 2023

12 Lectures and Posters
- OpenAIRE Coffee Lecture
- RDA Plenary and International Data Week
- Österreichischer Bibliothekskongress
- DARIAH Annual Event...

6 Invited International Workshops and Consultations
- Portuguese RDM Forum
- Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic
- Annual Open Science Festival, Germany
- Consortium of Slovenian Universities "SPOZNAJ", Slovenia
- Open Science Summer School, Slovenia
- University of Novi Sad, Serbia

Sharing expertise and gaining recognition.

Learning from international best practices.
Needs Assessment and Community Engagement

Generating solutions to under recognized challenges:

- Keeping data workflows organized despite researcher changeover
  - Implementing tools that streamline good RDM
- Developing consistent RDM training programs for Ph.D. students
- Encouraging open data practices, in addition to open publication

Goals
1) Introduce the Data Steward
2) Present Existing Resources
3) Evaluate Needs

Approach
- Departmental Meetings for PIs
- Postdoc Townhall
- PhD Student Roundtable

Target Groups
- PIs and Senior Scientists
- Postdocs
- PhD Students

Why a Data Steward?
- Scientific Knowledge
- Cultural Understanding
- Neutral Resource

Over 600 Researchers Reached.
Faculty Needs Comparison

Faculty of Life Sciences

- Collection and Analysis: 40%
- Archiving, Publication, and Reuse: 21%
- Planning: 27%
- Other: 12%

Centre for Microbiology and Environmental Systems Science

- Collection and Analysis: 53%
- Archiving, Publication, and Reuse: 21%
- Planning: 20%

Faculty of Philological and Cultural Studies

- Collection and Analysis: 22%
- Archiving, Publication, and Reuse: 40%
- Planning: 30%

Distributions derived from 79 research data management requests made to the data stewards (August 2022-August 2023). Distributions reflect number of requests, as opposed to time allocated to the request.
Observations

- Humanities focus more on archiving

- Sciences are more invested in data collection and analysis

- Humanities need more conversations about what is considered “data”

- The more homogenous the unit, the greater the interest in scalable workflows

- Graduate students are an excellent mechanism for spreading new ideas
Research Group Organization and Data Workflows at CeMESS

- Top priority according to initial needs assessment
- Bottom-up approach: starting with individual research groups

**Goals:**
- Clearly defined folder structures and file naming
- Improvement of metadata and documentation
- Easy data sharing workflows

**Role of the data steward:**
- Provided expertise and training
- Facilitated communication at group meetings
- Engineered transfer and upscaling of results
Archiving Dynamic Web Resources at the PhilKult

• Challenge: maintaining databases and websites and archiving web resources

• Goals:
  • Preserving non-traditional research output
  • Getting researchers to plan ahead
  • Fulfilling funders' requirements

• Role of the data steward*ess:
  • Identifies need with institutes
  • Connects researchers with ZID (project "mūsēum" and crawler trials)
  • Supports researchers with data management planning
  • Prepares guidelines for facilitating long-term preservation of websites

Cover image: Canva
Discipline-Specific Training: Courses for PhD Students

**Life Sciences and CeMESS**

- In Collaboration with Doctoral Schools
  - VDS MES
  - VDS CoBeNe
  - VDS PhaNuSpo
  - VDSEE

- Blended and Flipped Learning Approaches

- Hands-On and Activity Based

- Pre- and Post-Learning Assessment

- An Open Educational Resource

**Philological and Cultural Studies**

- Introduction to RDM for Daily Work

- Online and Flipped Learning Approaches

- Upcoming:
  - In-Person Courses in varied Locations
  - Advanced Courses
  - DARIAH Campus
  - Collaboration with HistKult Faculty

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"The specificity of the resources you addressed was very much appreciated."

"The online self-learning, as well as the course itself had an unusual, informal, very nice format, I really enjoyed."

"Hoher Neuigkeitswert (inhaltlich), Hands-on, interaktiv"
Our Tips and Tricks

• Leverage institutional expertise
  • Create a formal network
  • Embrace rapid communication

• Assess community needs
  • Use existing data
  • Conduct your own investigations
    • Ask people to complain!

• Build relationships
  • Be present, available, and visible
    • Find your allies

• Ensure possibilities outpace policies
  • Easy comes before mandatory
  • Not just what we change, but how we change

• Always keep learning
  • RDA interest groups
  • ERASMUS exchange

• Be kind and offer snacks
  • Be ready to crack some jokes
    • Juice boxes are powerful
Next Actions

• Legal Helpdesk for Research Data Management

• Growing Commitment by PIs and Departments to PhD Training
  • Commitment to RDM Course Enrollment
  • Mandatory Data Management Plans for PhD projects

• Continued Community Engagement
  • Data Champion Program Development

• Implementation of Electronic Lab Notebook Solutions

• Expanding Training for Bachelor's and Master's Students
  • Guest Lectures
Thank You!

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Data Stewards on the Univie Website