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Research Data Management Services at WMU: An Environmental Scan

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Research Data Management Services at WMU: An Environmental Scan

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1: Why Research Data Management Services?

What are Research Data Management (RDM) Services?:
RDM Services involve providing information, consulting, training in:
- Research data management planning
- Research data management guidance during research
- Research documentation and metadata
- Research data sharing and curation

of completed projects and published data (Fearon, et al., 2013).

Why is it Important to Manage Research Data?
Three main reasons:
- Many major grant funding agencies (e.g., NSF, NIH, NEH, etc.) require grant applicants to submit a RDM plan (MIT Libraries, [2015]).
- Research data is a university asset, the intellectual product of its faculty's and students' research, which merits consideration at both the data level and the university policy level (Erway, 2013).
- Researchers and their graduate students often do not have the time or expertise to address RDM issues (Carlson & Stowell-Bracke, 2013).

Academic Libraries and RDM Services?
Of all the RDM stakeholders (such as the office of research, research compliance office, information technology department, faculty and student researchers, and academic units) on a university campus, the library may be the one of the best situated to have a role in RDM because they have expertise in:
- Specific academic subject areas
- Archiving information sources; long-term preservation
- Metadata and name authorities
- Institutions repositories of "research outcomes"

(Erway, 2013).

2: Environmental Scan

WMU's University Libraries (UL) currently offers limited RDM services – an online LibGuide with basic info on RDM plans, external data repositories, best practices, and some RDM resources at WMU. The UL is interested in investigating potential role UL could have in offering RDM services.

To investigate this, I conducted the environmental scan:
- **Consulted the WMU webpages** of some of the typical RDM stakeholders on a campus Office of the Vice President of Research, Information technology department.
- **Interviewed WMU staff** suggested by colleagues and other interviewees.
- Used the info from the webpages and interviews to **analyze how existing and future RDM services** at WMU fit into the Research Life Cycle, which depicts the research process and how data is part of that process (Ray, 2014, p.70).

3: Results: RDM Services at WMU

RDM Planning Services

Office of Information Technology (OIT)
- **Senior Director Enterprise Systems:** Short-term storage back-up of electronic research data (M. Tomczak, personal communication, August 17, 2015).

Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR)
- During researchers' contract negotiation process **Research Contract Administrator** gives advice on terms **of** govern data use and sharing; wants to develop training on specific types of research agreements (K. Purnell, personal communication, August 25, 2015).
- **Research Officers** help researchers develop long-term data storage plans that meet funding agencies requirements (K. Purnell, personal communication, August 25, 2015).
- **Compliance Officer** provides info on data security, especially as related to data from human subjects and export controlled data. (K. Purnell, personal communication, August 25, 2015).

Office of Institutional Research (IR)
- **Research Director of Data Management** will include RDM in their next information plan. (T. Pattok, personal communication, September 10, 2015).

University Libraries
- **LibGuide**: Info on creating RDM plans

Legend
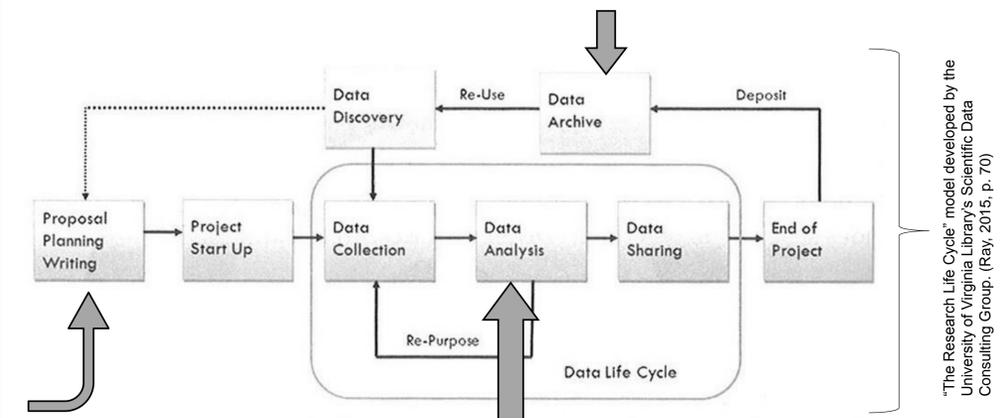Blue text = Existing Services

Red text = Proposed services

RDM Sharing and Curation

University Libraries (UL)
- **LibGuide**: Links to data repositories (University Libraries, [2015])

Office of Information Technology (OIT)
- Data storage and curation (M. Tomczak, personal communication, August 17, 2015).

"The Research Life Cycle" model developed by the University of Virginia Library's Scientific Data Consulting Group. (Ray, 2015, p. 70)

Research Documentation and Metadata

University Libraries (UL)
- **LibGuide**: Data management best practices (University Libraries, [2015])

4: Conclusions & Next Steps

Existing Services: The majority of the RDM services currently offered at WMU are Planning services. This may be due to the major funding agencies requiring data management plans. The only Sharing and Curation services and Documentation and Metadata services are available through the online LibGuide, which includes only very basic practices and has not been heavily marketed by the University Libraries.

Researchers' Needs: A major area this environmental scan did not address were the actual needs of WMU researchers. A survey of their existing RDM practices and what services, if any, they thing they need is an important next step.

Collaboration: During the interviews with OIT, OVPR, and IR staff, all indicated a willingness to collaborate. All of these units have slightly different sets of expertise, and combining them through collaboration could greatly benefit WMU researchers.

5: References

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